

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid USA is proud to announce a new curriculum focused on helping youth (ages 12-18) who may be experiencing a mental health challenge or in a crisis.

Youth Mental Health First Aid is a public education program which introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and most importantly – teaches individuals how to help a youth in crisis or experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. Mental Health First Aid uses role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect young people to professional, peer, social, and self-help care.

WHAT WILL PARTICIPANTS LEARN?

The course teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among adolescents, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, AD/HD, disruptive behavior disorders, and substance use disorder. Participants do not learn to diagnose, nor how to provide any therapy or counseling – rather, participants learn a core five-step action plan to support an adolescent developing signs and symptoms of mental illness or in an emotional crisis:

- Assess for risk of suicide or harm
- Listen non-judgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies

WHO SHOULD TAKE THE COURSE?

The course is designed for adults whom regularly interact with adolescents, but may also be appropriate for older adolescents (16 and older) so as to encourage youth peer to peer interaction. Anyone who regularly works or interacts with youth – teachers, athletic coaches, mentors, juvenile justice professionals – may find the course content useful. The core Mental Health First Aid course has been successfully offered to a variety of audiences including hospital staff, employers and business leaders, faith communities, law enforcement, and the general public.

Note: Youth Mental Health First Aid is not specifically designed for parents of youth with mental health challenges. Although parents & families may find the course content useful, the course provides a basic level of information and guidance, rather than more in-depth information on navigating the healthcare system, which parents may wish to explore.