

*Mental health problems will affect one in three Canadians at some point in their life. Chances are you know someone who needs help.*

## Course content

Participants will learn how to help people who are showing signs of mental health problems or who are experiencing a mental health crisis. The course does not train you to be a therapist, counsellor or mental health professional.

The course covers the following topics:

- What is meant by mental health and mental illness/ mental health problems
- Signs and symptoms of common mental health problems and crisis situations
- A basic model to provide mental health first aid
- Information about effective interventions and treatments
- How to access professional help

Mental health problems covered:

- Substance-related disorders
- Depression and bipolar disorder
- Anxiety disorders
- Psychosis
- Eating disorders (Youth course only)
- Deliberate self injury (Youth course only)

Mental health crisis situations covered:

- Suicidal behaviour
- Overdoses
- Panic attacks
- Reactions to traumatic events
- Psychotic episodes

Mental Health First Aid Canada  
Instructor information:



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Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

**Mental Health  
First Aid CANADA**

For general information about Mental Health  
First Aid Canada or a list of instructors contact:

Toll Free: 1-866-989-3985  
Email: [mhta@mentalhealthcommission.ca](mailto:mhta@mentalhealthcommission.ca)

Mental Health First Aid Canada teaches first  
aid skills to help someone who is developing  
mental health problems or is experiencing a  
mental health crisis.  
Anyone can benefit from learning mental  
health first aid.

Mental Health First Aid Canada is affiliated with Mental Health First Aid in Australia  
and Scotland. Mental Health First Aid Canada's operations are coordinated through  
the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

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[www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca)  
[www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca)

## What is mental health first aid?

Mental health first aid is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis is resolved. The concept is based on the model of medical first aid.

Some mental health problems are more common than many physical health problems. While people often know a lot about physical illness, most people have little knowledge about mental illness. This lack of understanding promotes fear and stigma. It prevents people from seeking help early and seeking the best kind of help. It also keeps people from providing appropriate support to friends, colleagues, family members and people around them simply because they do not know how.

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based course developed in Australia by Betty Kitchener and Professor Tony Jorm. The course has been formally evaluated and shows a number of benefits:

- Better recognition of mental health problems
- Increased knowledge about appropriate treatments
- Reduced stigma
- Increased confidence in providing help to others

*"When First Aid came into existence, the concept of teaching the average citizen to apply pressure to a wound saved people's lives. Mental Health First Aid will do something similar by assisting people in making the right kind of decisions."*

- Mental Health First Aid Canada Participant

## What is the Purpose of the course?

Mental Health First Aid teaches participants to help someone showing signs of a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The course aims to teach people to:

- Identify when a person may be a danger to themselves or to others and take steps to preserve life
- Recognize the early signs of mental health problems and provide help to prevent more serious problems from developing
- Provide comfort to someone with a mental health problem and support them in the recovery of their mental health.
- Guide a person towards the appropriate professional help.

## Course Format

Mental Health First Aid Basic is a 12-hour training course with a focus on adults with mental health problems.

Mental Health First Aid For Adults Who Interact with Youth is a 14-hour course with a focus on young people 12 to 24 with mental health problems. Both courses may be taken by anyone 18 years of age and older.

These are interactive courses that provide a supportive group learning environment. Practical skills are taught using a model that is easy to remember and apply in real-life settings.

## Who should attend?

Everyone can benefit from Mental Health First Aid Canada — members of the general public, teachers, health service providers, university students, emergency workers, frontline workers who deal with the public, volunteers, human resources professionals, employers, community groups.

## The instructors

Mental Health First Aid Canada instructors have been selected for their knowledge of mental health and their skill in delivering the course content. They have been trained by and maintain their certification through the Mental Health First Aid Canada program. To maintain the quality of the course and consistency in delivery, only qualified Mental Health First Aid Canada instructors may deliver the course.

## Expectations of course participants

After completing the Mental Health First Aid Canada course, participants will receive a Mental Health First Aid Canada Certificate. Participants also keep their copy of the first aid manual, which covers the course content and provides additional resources. Participants must attend all 12 or 14 hours of the course to receive their Mental Health First Aid certificate.