

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

64.1%

of youth with major depression do not receive any mental HEALTH TREATMENT.

Mental Health America

1 in 5

teens & young adults lives with a mental HEALTH CONDITION.

National Alliance for Mental Illness

5.13%

of youth report having a substance use or ALCOHOL PROBLEM.

Mental Health America

Why Youth Mental Health First Aid?

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you **how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders**. This 8-hour training gives adults who work with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to adolescents (ages 12-18) who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care.

WHAT IT COVERS

- Common signs and symptoms of mental illnesses in this age group, including:
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Eating disorders
 - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Common signs and symptoms of substance use.
- How to interact with an adolescent in crisis.
- How to connect the adolescent with help.

WHO SHOULD TAKE IT

- Teachers
- School staff
- Coaches
- Camp counselors
- Youth group leaders
- Parents
- People who work with youth

The course will teach you how to apply the ALGEE action plan:

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

TO FIND A COURSE OR CONTACT AN INSTRUCTOR IN YOUR AREA, VISIT
www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org OR EMAIL Info@MentalHealthFirstAid.org.

“As adults, we sometimes forget how hard it was being an adolescent. When we see a kid who is just miserable at school, we might think they choose to be that way — or that it’s just part of adolescence. But in fact, they might be in a mental health crisis, one they certainly did not choose and do not want. When a teacher says, ‘How can I be helpful?’ that is a powerful question.”

—Alyssa Fruchtenicht, *School-based Mental Health Counselor*



**MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID®**

Program Overview

The National Council developed the YMHFA USA curriculum and training program in collaboration with the National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health at Georgetown University, building upon the foundation of the evidence-based Mental Health First Aid Training and Research Program in Australia. The Australia program was developed using the consensus of international expert panels involving mental health consumers, caregivers, and professionals.

The Youth Mental Health First Aid course is designed to give ordinary people the skills to help a young person who is experiencing a mental health crisis or intervene early to prevent a crisis from occurring. The program is based on the principle that early intervention prevents mental illness from becoming more severe by encouraging people to seek help early. YMHFA teaches people ways to connect to the appropriate professional or encourage self-help care.

Youth Mental Health First Aid has been rigorously evaluated and is proven to improve mental health literacy and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. Because the training increases access to treatment, evaluations demonstrate that the program reduces the damaging and costly effects of mental and emotional disorders such as school dropouts, relationship issues, and drug and alcohol problems. The core message of YMHFA is communicated through a 5-step action plan encompassing the skills, resources, and knowledge to help connect a youth in crisis with appropriate professional and self-help care.

The program adheres to its fidelity by utilizing a core group of national experts who provide 32 hours of training to individuals who become certified instructors around the country. Those instructors teach an in-person course in local communities to individuals who become certified Mental Health First Aiders.

The course itself covers the following:

- What is YMHFA and what is the role of a youth mental health first aider
- Youth mental health problems in the United States
- Prevalence of mental health disorders
- Adolescent development
- Resiliency
- The spectrum of interventions
- YMHFA action plan
- Signs and symptoms
- Non-suicidal self injury
- Risk factors for developing a mental health disorder
- Protective factors
- Looking at anxiety, depression, eating disorders, ADHD,
- Assessing risk of suicide or harm and suicide warning signs

- Listening nonjudgmentally and encourage appropriate professional help, encouraging self help and other support strategies
- Panic attacks
- Self care

Methodology

The National Council for Behavioral Health trains, certifies, and supports instructors. Instructors serve as ambassadors for the program in their communities — generating awareness and demand — in addition to teaching the course and providing resources for treatment and help.

YMHFA participants typically include law enforcement and corrections officers; emergency first responders; human resources professionals; nurses and other primary care workers; education and university faculty, staff, and student leadership; library personnel, corporate human resource managers, faith community leaders; national guard and military families; mental health/substance use patients and family members; and other caring citizens.

Once certified, a YMHFA instructor is required to teach at least three community trainings per year to maintain certification. Ideal class size for a community training is 25-30 people. The intent is for instructors to offer the program for a nominal fee, even though program expenses — instructor time, participant manuals, venue and audio-visual costs, etc. — are significant. Instructors are often able to work with regional and local certifying bodies to award Continuing Education credits to multiple groups of professionals who take the YMHFA course.

The National Council trains and manages the national instructor network; consults on program implementation, growth, and marketing; analyzes evaluations from community courses; continuously enhances and updates the curriculum; and provides live and virtual refresher and upgrade courses for instructors. Technical assistance visits are carried out nationwide to ensure fidelity to the core program model. In addition, the National Council staff delivers the course in Washington DC and nationally to members of the public, opinion leaders, and key influencers. Even Michelle Obama has taken the course and Lady Gaga is very involved in the movement.

Goals & Objectives

The goal is to offer this to the NAECHY community to give up to 30 people the opportunity to have this knowledge and take it back to their schools/organizations to benefit the health and well being of the youth they serve and the youth in their personal lives.

The National Council believes that Youth Mental Health First Aid and Adult Mental Health First Aid can change the way America thinks about mental illness — that this simple yet powerful program holds the key to increasing literacy and understanding, promoting health, and connecting people to care.