

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



MHFA Training and Research Program

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THE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA) TRAINING AND RESEARCH PROGRAM WISHES ALL MHFA INSTRUCTORS AND FRIENDS OF THE PROGRAM A JOYFUL AND RESTFUL FESTIVE SEASON AND A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR.

The MHFA Program continues to be rolled out across Australia and overseas. The MHFA team at ORYGEN Research Centre, University of Melbourne wish to thank the MHFA Instructors for the wonderful work they are doing to increase the level of mental health literacy and to reduce the level of stigma across Australia. There are now over 600 MHFA Instructors across Australia and well over 55,000 people have attended a MHFA course.

1. MHFA PROGRAM RECEIVES TWO AWARDS

In recognition of these achievements, the MHFA Program received two awards this year:

1. The Winner of the Healthy Communities category of the LiFe AWARDS
2. The Winner of the Mental Health Promotion Mental Illness Prevention Program or Project category at the TheMHS Conference



Above: The Hon Brett Mason presented the award to Betty Kitchener and Len Kanowski, Sept 2007



Above: The Hon Brett Mason presented the award to Betty Kitchener and Prof Tony Jorm, Sept 2007

disorders and mental health crisis situations. These guidelines are being produced using the Delphi method, which is a systematic way of assessing the consensus of a panel of experts. The guidelines consist of first aid actions that have been rated as important or essential by expert panels of professionals, consumers and carers from across a number of developed English-speaking countries. So far, the following guidelines have been produced:

- Depression
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviours
- Psychosis
- Deliberate self-injury without suicidal intent

Future guidelines are planned to cover:

- Panic attacks
- Traumatic experiences
- Problem drinking
- Eating disorders

Mental Health First Aid Guidelines for Other Cultures

The above guidelines have been developed for use in developed English-speaking countries. They may not be applicable in other cultures or with minority cultures within developed English-speaking countries. Projects are underway to develop guidelines that can be applied in other cultural groups. The following guidelines are currently available:

- MHFA Guidelines for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples - Depression
- MHFA Guidelines for Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples - Psychosis
- MHFA Guidelines for Psychosis in Asian countries

All seven completed MHFA Guidelines can be downloaded from the MHFA website at this URL:

<http://www.mhfa.com.au/Guidelines.shtml>

Once all completed, these guidelines will be used to write a new edition of the content of the MHFA courses in the second half of 2008.

3. ADULT MHFA PROGRAM



The 12-hour Adult MHFA course was the first MHFA course developed and began in Canberra in 2001. It gives information for adults helping adults with developing mental health problems (depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis and substance use disorders) and first aid for a mental health crisis such as suicidal thoughts and behaviours, panic attack, experiencing a traumatic event, acute psychosis and overdose. Rigorous evaluation has been undertaken on this course and published in peer-reviewed journals. More information at this URL: <http://www.mhfa.com.au/evaluation.shtml>

Adult MHFA Program cont.....

A 5-day Instructor Training Course accredits successful trainees to teach this 12-hour Adult MHFA course. Application forms and all MHFA Instructor Training courses for 2008 are listed on the MHFA website at thus URL: <http://www.mhfa.com.au/training.shtml>

Good feedback from MHFA course participants

1. Helen, a physio in Tasmania writes:

The MHFA training has stood me in good stead in my clinical practice, especially dealing with people expressing suicidal thoughts. Part of my routine assessment now addresses mood. I am constantly being told, "You are the first person to ask how I (emphasis) am feeling". I can honestly say, that prior to doing the MHFA training. I was not so comfortable addressing the mental health issues.

2. Barry, a MHFA Instructor and policeman in rural NSW writes:

I've had a number of participants like agronomists tell me that when they attend farms they find people pour their hearts out about mental health issues. They are finding that MHFA is a great resource for them as they work with people on the land.

Stories from Instructors of the Adult MHFA Course

1. Brett Kipling, our very first MHFA Instructor in the Indian Ocean Territories, works both as a school psychologist at the Christmas Island District High School and as a community based psychologist for the Indian Ocean Territories Health Service (IOTHS).

Brett reports:

Recently nearly 30 local people across both Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands completed their training to become Mental Health First Aiders. The course was run over four sessions in each location. Participants at the local courses had the following to say about Mental Health First Aid.

"I enjoyed the course. Believe it is valuable to learn more about mental health issues. Very relevant to remote isolated setting also .Very helpful! I have gained an immense amount of knowledge that I was previously unaware of. I feel that I will use the content in both my personal and professional life. This is a valuable tool for dealing with people in a small community. Often people we know or live with are struggling mentally and we don't know how to read the signs or assist."



MHFA participants – Cocos (Keeling) Islands



MHFA participants – Christmas Island

Adult Program cont...

2. Lynda Worthington is one of a team of MHFA instructors across the various Monash University campuses in VIC. She designed this beautiful flannel flower dress to promote the Mental Health First Aid course at Monash University. More information can be read at this URL: <http://www.monash.edu.au/news/monashmemo/stories/20070718/mental-health.html>



E-Learning version of the 12-hr Adult MHFA course

In 2006, with funding from the Australia Dept of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), the MHFA Program worked with the Mental Health Council of Australia to develop an e-learning course on MHFA in the workplace for use by places of employment.

The MHFA Program has now further enhanced this CD to be an e-learning version of the Adult MHFA course. From March 2008, after its launch, this will be available for purchase by members of the public who will be able to get a MHFA certificate by completing the MHFA CD in their own time and then attending a half-day face-to-face course to practice the MHFA skills.

We always undertake to rigorously evaluate any new MHFA course. We have been successful to obtain a grant of \$60,000 from the Australian Rotary Health Research Fund to employ a research assistant to conduct this research in 2008.

4. CALD MHFA UPDATE

The MHFA continues to receive interest and enquiries from a number of cultural groups within Australia to have the Adult MHFA course adapted for their communities.

African community interest in MHFA

The MHFA Team commenced negotiations with members of the African community in Melbourne this year, with plans to conduct MHFA courses for African leaders in Melbourne in February 2008. If funding can be secured, we plan to work closely with key members of the African communities to adapt the course to better meet the needs of the respective communities.

Vietnamese MHFA (VMHFA)

Two of our experienced VMHFA master instructors, Thuy Dinh and Jean-Louis Nguyen, conducted a VMHFA Instructor Training course in Melbourne in September this year. Vietnamese mental health workers from Sydney and Melbourne completed the 5-days the training, with the number of Vietnamese MHFA instructors now totally ten. Professor Harry Minas from the Centre for International Mental Health at the University of Melbourne is working with the VMHFA team to evaluate and promote the VMHFA course and program in the Vietnamese community in Sydney and Melbourne.

Croatian MHFA

Canberra-based MHFA instructor Branka Vlaicevic continues to conduct MHFA courses for members of the Canberra Croatian community as well as other community groups. Branka has maintained a strong interest in getting the MHFA course to a number of CALD communities since becoming an accredited instructor in 2005.

Italian MHFA

Cristina Mitola, an Italian psychologist from Padua Italy, trained as a MHFA instructor in 2005. Cristina, who now lives in Canberra, and Bungendore-based MHFA instructor Dr Leanne Craze have commenced discussions about delivering MHFA courses in Griffith NSW where there is a large Italian community. It is anticipated these courses will commence in 2008.

Any enquiries regarding MHFA for culturally and linguistically diverse communities should be directed to Len Kanowski T: 03 9342 37767 or E: Len.Kanowski@mh.org.au

5. ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MHFA PROGRAM (AMHFA)



ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA Program (AMHFA) commenced in March 2007, with financial support from Auseinet, a Nicks Russell Drysdale Fellowship and the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH). Two Indigenous staff members, Kara Eddington and Rhys Kinsey have been recruited to work with Len Kanowski on this program. An AMHFA manual, workbook and teaching materials have been developed in close consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Three culturally appropriate DVDs are being developed – depression, suicide and MHFA for psychosis.

The AMHFA Program aims to train and accredit a minimum of 100 Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander instructors across Australia by mid 2008. OATSIH is providing scholarships to cover course and associated expenses for 60 of these instructors. The accredited instructors will conduct courses in Aboriginal community-controlled health services and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities.

Since March 2007, seven successful 5-day instructor training courses have been conducted – Orange & Sydney NSW, Cairns and Brisbane QLD, Broome WA, Alice Springs NT and Melbourne VIC. Additional instructor courses are planned for 2008 in Adelaide and Port Augusta SA, Perth and Albany WA, Hobart TAS, Darwin NT, Kempsey NSW, Cairns and Toowoomba QLD, and Echuca VIC. Also, two 3-day AMHFA courses have been conducted this year for non-Indigenous people who are already accredited instructors of the Adult MHFA course and who have experience in working with Aboriginal people. All AMHFA Instructor Courses for 2008 are listed on the MHFA website: http://www.mhfa.com.au/instructor_courses.shtml

As with all our MHFA courses, the AMHFA program will be evaluated. A small team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff at the ORYGEN Research Centre, University of Melbourne, have begun collecting the data late this year. The results of the evaluation will be available towards the end of 2008. Further information about the program can be obtained by contacting Kara Eddington karae@unimelb.edu.au, Rhys Kinsey ekinsey@unimelb.edu.au or Len Kanowski Len.Kanowski@mh.org.au

Story from an Instructor of the AMHFA Course

Jacqueline Jackson from Bateman's Bay NSW is an Aboriginal Mental Health Worker who was one of the first Aboriginal instructors to train as an Instructor of the 14-hour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA course. She recently conducted the course for Aboriginal prison inmates at June Correctional Centre, June NSW. This was an initiative instigated by the Health Services Manager at the prison. The 14-hour AMHFA course was positively evaluated by the participants. The Correctional Centre Board of Management is supportive of making the courses a regular event within the Correctional Centre.

6. YOUTH MHFA PROGRAM (YMHFA)



The Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Program commenced in February 2007, with some funding from the Australian Dept Health and Ageing under a National Suicide Prevention Community Based Grant. Chris Scanlan has been appointed the co-ordinator YMHFA Program for a period of 18 months.

The 14-hour YMHFA course has been designed for adults living with or working with adolescents aged between 12 – 18 years. The course covers the symptoms, risk factors and first aid for the developing mental illnesses of depression, anxiety, psychosis, substance use disorders, eating disorders and self-harm and associated crisis situations. The course can be delivered as either a 2-day training package or as 4 separate modules.

To become an instructor of the Youth MHFA course, a person needs to already be an accredited instructor of the Adult MHFA course and also have additional skills and knowledge in the youth mental health field. There are scholarships available to pay the training fees to attend a 3-day YMHFA Instructor Training Course. So far, three YMHFA Instructor Courses have been conducted with, 66 YMHFA instructors now trained. There is a good national spread of instructors representing all states and territories, except for the NT. We also have two YMHFA instructors in both Canada and Hong Kong.

The inaugural 5.5-day Instructor Course begins in April 2008, for suitably qualified workers in the youth sector, who are not already accredited as instructors of the Adult MHFA course. This training will accredit instructors to teach only the 14-hour Youth Mental Health First Aid course.

All courses for 2008 are listed on the MHFA website.

http://www.mhfa.com.au/instructor_courses.shtml#YMHFA

Further information can be obtained by contacting the YMHFA Program coordinator, Chris Scanlan: on T: 03 9342 3763 or E: cscanlan@unimelb.edu.au .

7. INTERNATIONAL MHFA NEWS <http://www.mhfa.com.au/international.shtml>

The MHFA Australia Training and Research Program has spread, not only across Australia in the last seven years, but also internationally. This had been mainly due to hard work and rigorous evaluation with good outcomes and also, perhaps, because it just seems to be the right thing at the right time for many communities. Here are some updates from the MHFA International Programs.

a. Scottish MHFA <http://www.healthscotland.org.uk/smhfa/>



Scottish MHFA (SMHFA) Program now has over 200 MHFA instructors who have conducted their 12-hr MHFA course to approximately 7,000 people. An independent evaluation reported very positive findings about the course, participants learning outcomes after 5 months and the training and support for Instructors.

The SMHFA Program has been the first MHFA Program to translate the course and MHFA instructor kit into British Sign Language (BSL), along with the production of some additional DVD clips for specific parts of this course. In January 2008 some BSL speakers will be trained as Instructors.

The Scottish MHFA Program is also working with some Welsh organisations to help establish a Welsh MHFA Program.

International News cont...

b) MHFA Hong Kong <http://www.mhahk.org.hk/>



This year, the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong (MHAHK) has produced and printed 4000 copies of a Chinese version of the MHFA manual for Hong Kong. The association is conducting 2-3 classes per month and over 2,446 people in Hong Kong have now attended a MHFA course. The MHAHK has also produced a MHFA video in Chinese. The MHAHK is now exploring opportunities to introduce the MHFA program into mainland China and Macau.

In addition to this activity, Alice Ko and Antony Pang, two Youth MHFA Instructors in Hong Kong, have trained 15 youth workers in their agency in the Youth MHFA course.



c) MHFA Canada. www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca

MHFA Canada continues to grow since its official start in fall 2006. Canada has 102 accredited MHFA instructors in five provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland). Some instructors are reporting that they are having difficulty keeping up with demand - their courses are filling in just two days! So far over 1,500 people have taken the 12-hour course. Already the second edition of the MHFA manual is nearly off to print.

Louise Nieder-Heitmann and Gail Eastman (Master Facilitators) were thrilled to be part of the inaugural Youth MHFA instructor training course in Australia in April this year. The Youth MHFA Canada course is now under development and, thanks to government funding, the Canadian version will be offered to at least one staff person in every school in Alberta – hopefully just the beginning.

e) MHFA Singapore <http://www.traumarecovery.com.sg/mhfa.html>



An MOU was signed by MHFA Australia and Changi General Hospital in June 2007 to set up MHFA Singapore. The first Instructors' course under MHFA Singapore was conducted by Len Kanowski in July 2007, together with local co-trainers. This has brought the number of MHFA instructors in Singapore to a total of 18. Already 480 people have attended the 12-hr MHFA Singapore course.

The MHFA Singapore team has written, piloted and printed a localised Singapore version of the MHFA Manual. The official launch of Singapore MHFA occurred on 13 December 2007. The MHFA Singapore team is presently collaborating with various MHFA instructors in Singapore to develop other versions of the MHFA Singapore program. Early next year, MHFA instructors at the National University of Singapore will customise the training to suit their tertiary student population. At Changi Hospital, some MHFA instructors who work in the community with the elderly are developing an Elderly MHFA Module. Another 3 MHFA Instructors are working on a Workplace MHFA Module, which will be an addition to a shortened Module 4, as drug addiction is not as relevant to the elderly in Singapore.

d) MHFA England www.mentalhealthfirstaid.csip.org.uk



The MHFA manual is well on the way, as is the MHFA instructor kit and MHFA England has commissioned its own film clips. The process has been user led and the end product is looking good. There is an interactive training DVD format, with the aim to facilitate some discussions. Really strong interest has been shown across government departments and substantial funding is being sought for MHFA, since interest is growing rapidly.

f) MHFA in other countries

A number of organisations in the USA will be modifying and rolling out a MHFA US Program during 2008. So far, there is involvement from the National Council of Community Behavioral Healthcare (<http://www.thenationalcouncil.org/>), the Mental Hygiene Administration in the state of

International News cont.....

Maryland (<http://www.dhmf.state.md.us/mha/>) and the Transformation Office in the Dept of Mental Health in the state of Missouri (<http://www.dmh.mo.gov/transformation/transformation.htm>).

Last month, Thuy Dinh, one of our Australian Vietnamese MHFA Instructors accompanied Prof Harry Minas from the Centre for International Mental Health, University of Melbourne, to

Vietnam to investigate the possibilities of rolling out the MHFA course there. This is a natural development from the MHFA course that has been modified for Vietnamese people living in Australia.

This month, a group of eight young psychiatrists from Japan undertook the 12-hr Adult MHFA course in Melbourne with the view to adapting it for use in **Japan** with new medical graduates.

In 2008 a delegation of Maori people will visit the MHFA Team in Melbourne to discuss options for taking the MHFA course to Maori populations in **New Zealand**. Whilst in Australia the delegation will attend a 14 hour Aboriginal MHFA course and sit-in and observe an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander instructor training course.

8. MHFA SHOP ONLINE

MHFA materials can be purchased online from: http://www.mhfa.com.au/course_manual.shtml

These include the Adult, Youth and Aboriginal MHFA manuals and a DVD showing the application of the MHFA Action Plan to help someone disturbed with psychosis.



ORYGEN
Youth Health

9. LOOKING FOR MORE TRAINING IN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH?

Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Sciences (Young People's Mental Health)

The Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Sciences (Young People's Mental Health) is offered via the Department of Psychiatry at The University of Melbourne in conjunction with

ORYGEN Youth Health, and is specifically designed to address issues of mental health in young people. The Graduate Diploma is a two-year, part-time program that is delivered

exclusively via the method of distance education. Teaching materials consist of DVD lectures and lecture notes with reading materials (CD-ROM format). The web site link is:

<http://www.orygen.org.au/contentPage.asp?pageCode=GRADEDMENTALHS>

There are also a number of distance education short courses in young people's mental health available (depression, bipolar disorder, psychosis and dual diagnosis). Applications for the Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Sciences, Young People's Mental Health, are available by contacting via phone (03) 9342 3758, fax (03) 9342 3745, or email postgrad@orygen.org.au

For further information or enquiries contact The Manager, Training and Development, ORYGEN Youth Health at (03) 9342 3748.

Kind regards,

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