

Mental Health First Aid in Schools

Adolescence is a time of important change and development. It is also a time when mental health problems such as depression and anxiety first emerge.

During the high school years, mental health problems can negatively affect students' grades, attendance, relationships, physical and psychological development, all of which can have a lifelong impact.

Schools are an amazing source of support for teens and their families but they can also be a source of strain or stress, and it is often in schools where symptoms of mental health problems are first identified.

It is also important to remember that it's not only students that suffer from strain or stress in the school environment. For many teachers the day-to-day effects of managing student, co-worker and parent relationships, together with work and time pressures, can lead to both physical and mental problems.

This is where Mental Health First Aid Australia can help

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Australia offers a suite of early-intervention education courses for young people and adults that increase mental health literacy and teach the practical skills needed to support someone experiencing a mental health problem.

Increasing mental health literacy within whole school communities through targeted training, helps increase teacher, staff and student resilience.

Mental Health First Aid training equips people with the knowledge and confidence to approach or respond to staff members, students or peers who may need information or support. The impact of that first supportive conversation for any individual, and in particular a young person, in a time of need can be profound.

What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental health first aid is the initial help offered to someone who is experiencing a mental health problem or a mental health crisis until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves.

Mental Health First Aid Training in Schools

There are **3** courses recommended for the secondary school setting:

Standard Mental Health First Aid
Teaches adults to support staff members and other adults.

Youth Mental Health First Aid
Teaches school staff, teachers, support workers, parents and other adults to support young people.

Teen Mental Health First Aid
Teaches students in Years 7–9 and 10–12 how to offer support to their peers and seek appropriate help from a trained adult where required.

It is important to note that Teen MHFA training can only be delivered once 10% of all staff have completed Youth MHFA training. The Teen MHFA course must also be delivered to a whole student cohort e.g. all Year 9 students.

“In my nine years of teaching this is probably the best and most useful Professional Development I have done.”

St Augustine's College Staff Member

It is estimated that in the last 12 months:

1 in 5

adults experienced a mental health problem



1 of 5

students received informal support from a school staff member for an emotional or behavioural problem¹



1 in 7

young people (aged 4–17) were assessed as having a mental disorder equating to **560,000** children and adolescents¹

¹ Australian child and adolescent survey of mental health and wellbeing, 2015



Course Delivery Modes Available

Teen MHFA training is 3.5 hours long and delivered via 3 face-to-face classroom sessions with an accredited MHFA Instructor.

Standard and Youth MHFA training can be delivered 1 of 3 ways to best suit your organisational and employee needs:



Face-to-Face: A 2-day course led by an accredited MHFA Instructor.



Blended Face-to-Face: Combines self-paced eLearning followed by a face-to-face training session led by an accredited MHFA Instructor.



Blended Online: Combines self-paced eLearning and video conferencing sessions led by an accredited MHFA Instructor.

Our Instructors

MHFA Australia have a network of 2,100+ trained and accredited MHFA Instructors who deliver MHFA courses, with local and place-based knowledge. This course delivery model lets you choose an Instructor that best reflects the needs of your school community.

Find an accredited MHFA Instructor that's right for your school:
mhfa.com.au/instructors

Build Capacity in your School Community

Many schools are choosing to nominate staff to become **Standard, Youth or Teen MHFA** Instructors.

Our unique Instructor training model is a cost-effective and sustainable way to embed MHFA training within school communities. By funding staff members to become accredited MHFA Instructors, MHFA courses can then be delivered to staff, parents and students on an on-going basis.

Learn more about MHFA Instructor training:
mhfa.com.au/be-an-instructor

Access and Funding

Potential sources of funding for the delivery of Mental Health First Aid training within schools include Primary Health Networks, local, state and federal governments and community health organisations.

Evidence-Based Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First Aid training is a cost-effective early intervention program that supports and mobilises whole school communities to take a proactive approach to mental health education in schools.

The School and University Engagement Team are here to help and support schools and Departments of Education at any stage of their MHFA training journey.

Get in touch via email at schools@mhfa.com.au

"I feel more confident in responding to mental health problems that occur at school, with students, parents, volunteers and staff."

Youth MHFA Participant

Why choose Mental Health First Aid Australia?

- ✓ Evidence-based
- ✓ Rigorously evaluated
- ✓ Internationally recognised
- ✓ Award winning
- ✓ 4+ million people trained worldwide
- ✓ MHFAider support network

Mental Health First Aid training helps whole school communities to:

Intervene Early and recognise the warning signs of mental health problems

Learn Skills needed to speak openly and accurately about mental health

Respond in Crisis situations where a person may be at risk of harm

Reduce Stigma and increase support for people with mental health problems

Learn about MHFA in Action by visiting our case studies page:

workplace.mhfa.com.au/case-studies

