



**MENTAL HEALTH  
FIRST AID®**  
For Anyone. For Everyone.™

# About Mental Health First Aid and our Courses

**Mental Health First Aid® is a national not-for-profit organisation focused on mental health training and research. Our core work is to develop Mental Health First Aid (MHFA™) courses, and train Instructors to deliver these courses to communities or workplaces across the Australia.**

MHFA courses teach members of the public how to provide initial help to a person who is developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional help is received, or the crisis resolves.

## **World-wide Reach**

Since its inception in 2000, Mental Health First Aid has evolved into a global movement across Australia and in over 25 countries. To date, over 4 million people worldwide have been trained, including over 1,000,000 Australians.

## **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Instructor Training**

Mental Health First Aid Australia trains and accredits skilled Instructors with a passion for improving the mental health of their communities. Mental Health First Aid Australia provides ongoing support and information to our accredited Instructors through regular communications, high quality course materials as well as professional networking and upskilling opportunities. Our network of over 2,400 Instructors have trained over 1,000,000 people in Australia.

## **International Recognition**

The Mental Health First Aid Program has been recognised with a number of Australian and international awards, including the THeMHS Medal. It has been recognised in the UK as an example of radical efficiency and has been listed in the USA by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) on their National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP).

## **Introduction to Mental Health First Aid Courses**

Around 1 in 5 Australian adults experience a common mental illness each year. Understanding how to talk about mental health and help someone in need are important skills. Many people feel uncomfortable and unprepared when thinking about starting a conversation with someone they are concerned about.

During a MHFA course, participants will learn how to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health problems and learn the skills to feel confident and able to help.

Having mental health first aid skills means that you can assist someone developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis and make a real difference to your community.

# About Mental Health First Aid and our Courses

## Evidence-based Courses

MHFA courses are based on evidence of what is best practice mental health first aid to support someone who has a mental health problem or is experiencing a mental health crisis. This evidence has been developed in partnership with the University of Melbourne, through developing Delphi method guidelines that cover a number of mental health problems, crises and in different contexts. All MHFA courses are then evaluated, using rigorous scientific methods, to ensure they are having a positive impact.

These evaluations consistently show that MHFA training is associated with improved knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatments, knowledge of appropriate first aid strategies, and confidence in providing first aid to individuals with mental illness, benefits which are maintained over time. Some studies have also shown improved mental health in those who attend the training, decreases in stigmatising attitudes and increases in the amount and type of support provided to others.

Read more on [research evaluating MHFA course](#)

Read more on [research informing MHFA course curriculum](#)

Find out more about [taking a course](#)

## MHFA Training Outcomes

### KNOWLEDGE

Increases mental health literacy

### CONFIDENCE

Increases confidence in providing mental health first aid

### DE-STIGMATISING

Decreases stigmatising attitudes

### SUPPORT

Increases the support provided to others

## Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace

More and more workplaces are realising the impact of mental health problems at work on their people and productivity. Encouraging early help-seeking is one way to promote a mentally healthy workplace. This is where Mental Health First Aid can help.

Mental Health First Aid offers early-intervention education courses for adults in the workplace that increase mental health literacy and teach the practical skills needed to support a co-worker or another adult, who may be experiencing a mental health problem.

[Download the Mental Health in the Workplace Fact Sheet.](#)

## Mental Health First Aid in the Community

Despite the prevalence of mental illness in the community and the fact that mental health and well-being are becoming more openly discussed, many people still find it difficult to know what to say or how to support someone who may be experiencing a mental health problem. This is where Mental Health First Aid can help.

Mental Health First Aid training offers a suite of early-intervention education courses for local community members that increase mental health literacy and teach the practical skills needed to support family members, friends, co-workers or others in the community who may be experiencing a mental health problem.

[Download the Mental Health in the Community Fact Sheet.](#)

## Mental Health First Aid in Schools

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. This is where Mental Health First Aid can help.

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

[Download the Mental Health in the Schools Fact Sheet.](#)

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid Program

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid (AMHFA) program is led by Aboriginal professionals and recognises the need for culturally responsive mental health training to empower individuals and communities. Our courses aim to reduce stigma and shame and acknowledge that professional support is not always immediately available.

All AMHFA courses have been developed by our Aboriginal Curriculum Developer in consultation with our AMHFA Program Team and Instructors and have been purposely designed to support and promote Accredited Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander MHFA (AMHFA) Instructors to draw upon their own unique and instrumental local cultural knowledge, to enrich the content and enable culturally informed and safe delivery to all Australian's. AMHFA courses embrace significant tailoring that includes cultural considerations, protocols, and yarn ups. Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander film makers, lived experience stories, and actors are also engaged in the development of our materials.

# About Mental Health First Aid and our Courses

## Mental Health First Aid Officers

People who attend MHFA training can complete an online assessment to be accredited as a Mental Health First Aider™. The accreditation is valid for three years.

Just like appointing physical first aid officers, many organisations choose to appoint accredited Mental Health First Aiders to the role of Mental Health First Aid Officer within the workplace.

Officers are appointed and supported to:

- Provide mental health first aid within their worksite
- Escalate any matters in a prompt and appropriate fashion according to relevant organisational policy and procedures.

[Download the MHFA Officer Fact Sheet](#)

## Mental Health First Aid Skilled Workplace Program

The Mental Health First Aid Skilled Workplace Program recognises workplaces for their commitment to Mental Health First Aid training.

It is a way of celebrating organisations across Australia who not only invest in developing mental health first aid skills in their people, but also show a strong commitment to embedding the program into their organisation's culture; through actions like senior leadership support, relevant policies, supporting Mental Health First Aid Officers and continuous improvement.

Participating in the Mental Health First Aid Skilled Workplace Program is a clear demonstration of your commitment to building a mentally healthy workplace, both to your staff and your external stakeholders.

Workplaces can apply online anytime and recognition lasts for two years. Apply online free of charge at [mhfa.com.au/skilledworkplace](https://mhfa.com.au/skilledworkplace)

## Mental Health First Aid Champion Communities Program

The Mental Health First Aid Champion Communities Program, supports and recognises communities across Australia for their commitment to MHFA training.

It is a way of recognising Australia Local Government Areas (LGAs) that not only invest in developing mental health first aid skills in their people, but also demonstrate a strong commitment to embedding MHFA training within their local community setting in a planned, integrated, and sustainable way.

The program promotes partnerships and collaboration between Local Councils, organisations, groups, individuals, and Instructors to engage and support communities to deliver MHFA training across a range of settings and population groups within the local community.

[Learn more about the program and the application criteria.](#)

## Types of MHFA Courses

There are core MHFA courses to learn how to assist specific Australian population groups, and specialised MHFA courses to learn how to help someone experiencing a specific crisis or situation.

Core MHFA courses:

- Standard Mental Health First Aid
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Teen Mental Health First Aid
- Older Person Mental Health First Aid
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Mental Health First Aid.

Specialised MHFA courses:

- Conversations about Gambling
- Conversations about Suicide
- Conversations about Non-suicidal Self-injury
- Talking about Gambling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Talking about Suicide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
- Talking about Non-suicidal Self-injury for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

More information can be found on the Mental Health First Aid Australia website: [mhfa.com.au/courses](https://mhfa.com.au/courses)

## Lived Experience

Mental Health First Aid is committed to telling the stories of people with lived experiences of mental health problems.

MHFA courses are based on the expert consensus, of people with lived experience of mental health problems and mental health professionals.

## What is covered in an MHFA course?

Learn to recognise common mental health problems, how to provide initial help to someone experiencing a mental health problem using a practical, evidence-based Action Plan, and how to respond in a crisis situation. During the course, participants have the opportunity to practice new skills in a safe environment.

**Note:** This is an education course designed to teach people the skills to give first aid to others, it is not a therapy or support group.

## Mental Health First Aid Core Courses



### Standard Mental Health First Aid

The 12-hour Standard Mental Health First Aid course teaches any adult (18 years and over) how to provide initial support to someone who is experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

The 12-hours training course can be delivered in 1 of 3 ways:



**Face-to-face:** a 2-day Instructor led session.



**Blended Face-to-face:** Self-paced eLearning followed by a 4-hour face-to-face Instructor led session.



**Blended Online:** Self-paced eLearning followed by a 2 x 2.5-hour Instructor led video conferencing sessions.

Learn about the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems in adults, how to provide initial help, where and how to get professional help, what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective, and how to provide first aid in a crisis situation.



### Youth Mental Health First Aid

The 14-hour Youth Mental Health First Aid course teaches any adult (18 years and over) how to provide initial support to adolescents experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

The 14-hours training course can be delivered in 1 of 3 ways:



**Face-to-face:** a 2-day Instructor led session.



**Blended Face-to-face:** Self-paced eLearning followed by either 1 x full day, or 2 x half day face-to-face Instructor led session/s.



**Blended Online:** Self-paced eLearning followed by a 3 x 2.5-hour Instructor led video conferencing sessions.

Learn about the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems in young people, how to provide initial help, where and how to get professional help, what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective, and how to provide first aid in a crisis situation.



### Teen Mental Health First Aid

The Teen Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course teaches high school students in Years 7–9 and 10–12, how to provide initial support to their friends.

This course is taught over 3 x 60–75mins classroom sessions.



**Face-to-face:** The Year 7–9 course is delivered via 3 x 60min face-to-face Instructor led sessions.

The Year 10–12 course is delivered via 3 x 75mins face-to-face Instructor led sessions.

The training must be delivered to an entire cohort of students AND can only be delivered in settings where at least 10% of adults have been trained in Youth MHFA.

Students will learn how to recognise when a friend is experiencing major changes in their thinking, feeling and behaviour which may indicate the presence of a mental health problem.

## Mental Health First Aid Core Courses



### Older Person Mental Health First Aid

The 12-hour Older Person Mental Health First Aid course teaches any adult (18 years and over), particularly those who work with, live with or care for older people aged 65+, how to provide initial support to someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

**This 12-hour training course is available via face-to-face delivery.**



#### Face-to-face:

The 12-hour training course can be face-to-face in one of two ways: a 2-6-hour OR 4 x 3-hour Instructor led sessions.

Learn about the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems in older people, how to provide initial help, where and how to get professional help, what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective, and how to provide first aid in a crisis situation.



### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid

The 14-hour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid course teaches any adult (18 years and over) how to provide initial support to an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

**The 14-hour training course can be delivered in 1 of 3 ways:**



**Face-to-face:** a 2-day Instructor led session.



**Blended Face-to-face:** Self-paced eLearning followed by a 4-hour face-to-face Instructor led session.



**Blended Online:** Self paced eLearning followed by a 1 x 5-hour Instructor led video conferencing sessions.

Learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social and emotional wellbeing, mental health problems in communities, how to provide initial help, where and how to get professional help, and how to provide first aid in a crisis situation.



### Youth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid

The 14-hour Youth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid (AMHFA) course teaches any adult (18 years and over) how to provide initial support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who may be experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

**The 14-16 hour training course can be delivered in 1 of 2 ways:**



**Face-to-face:** a 2-2 ½ day Instructor led session.



**Blended Online:** Self-paced eLearning followed by a 1 x 5-hour Instructor led video conferencing session.

Learn about the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, how to provide initial help, where and how to get professional help, what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective, and how to provide first aid in a crisis situation.

## MHFA Specialised Courses



### Conversations about Suicide

The 4-hour Mental Health First Aid Conversations about Suicide course teaches any adult (18 years and over) how to identify, approach and support someone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

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**This 4-hour training course is available via face-to-face delivery.**

Learn how to identify the warning signs for suicide, how to safely have a conversation with someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours and confidently support the person in crisis. Participants will also have the opportunity to practice these skills in a safe environment.



### Conversations about Non-suicidal Self-injury

The 4-hour Mental Health First Aid Conversations about Non-suicidal Self-injury course teaches any adult (18 years and over) how to identify, approach and support someone who is engaging in self-injury.

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**This 4-hour training course is available via face-to-face delivery.**

Learn the skills and knowledge to help someone talk about their self-injury, how to keep them safe and connect them to appropriate professional help. Participants will also have the opportunity to practice these skills in a safe environment.



### Conversations about Gambling

The 4-hour Mental Health First Aid Conversations about Gambling course teaches any adult (18 years and over) how to identify, approach and support someone experiencing gambling harm.

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**This 4-hour training course is available via face-to-face delivery.**

Learn about the risk factors, signs, symptoms and motivations which may underpin gambling harm, how to approach someone about their gambling harm, how relapse might affect someone experiencing gambling harm, and how to manage your own self-care. Participants will also have the opportunity to practice these skills in a safe environment.

## MHFA Specialised Courses



### Talking about Suicide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The 5-hour Mental Health First Aid Talking about Suicide course teaches any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult (18 years and over) how to identify, approach and support someone who is experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

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**This 5-hour training course is available via face-to-face delivery.**

Learn how to identify the risk factors and warning signs for suicide, how to safely have a conversation with someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours and confidently support the person in crisis. Participants will also have the opportunity to practice these skills in a safe environment.



### Talking about Gambling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The 5-hour Mental Health First Aid Talking about Gambling course teaches any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult (18 years and over) how to identify, approach and support someone experiencing gambling harm.

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**This 5-hour training course is available via face-to-face delivery.**

Learn about the risk factors, signs, symptoms and motivations which may underpin gambling harm, how to approach someone about their gambling harm, how relapse might affect someone experiencing gambling harm, and how to manage your own self-care. Participants will also have the opportunity to practice these skills in a safe environment.

## MHFA Refresher Courses



### Standard Refresher Mental Health First Aid

The refresher course allows participants who have previously completed a Standard Mental Health First Aid course to refresh their knowledge and skills. The course also offers Accredited MHFAiders an opportunity to extend their accreditation for a further 3 years.

**The Standard Refresher course can be delivered in 1 of 2 ways:**



**Face-to-face:** 3-hour Instructor led session.



**Online:** 5-hour online Instructor led session.

Participants will gain an understanding of the latest research in the mental health field, learn the 3 Key Actions to help someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours, and work through complex mental health first aid interactions.



### Youth Refresher Mental Health First Aid

The refresher course allows participants who have previously completed a Youth Mental Health First Aid course to refresh their knowledge and skills. The course also offers Accredited MHFAiders an opportunity to extend their accreditation for a further 3 years.

**The Youth Refresher course can be delivered in 1 of 2 ways:**



**Face-to-face:** 3-hour Instructor led session.



**Online:** 5-hour online Instructor led session.

Participants will gain an understanding of the latest research in the mental health field, learn the 3 Key Actions to help someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours, and work through complex mental health first aid interactions.



### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Refresher Mental Health First Aid

The refresher course allows participants who have previously completed a Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid course to refresh their knowledge and skills. The course also offers Accredited MHFAiders an opportunity to extend their accreditation for a further 3 years.

**The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Refresher course is delivered:**



**Face-to-face:** 4-hour Instructor led session.

Participants will gain an understanding of the latest research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health, learn the 3 Key Actions to help someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours, and work through complex mental health first aid interactions.