



Mental Health First Aid: The What and the Why

Melinda Vasquez, Presenter
Chief Officer of Cultural and Community Affairs

What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid is the help offered to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves.

Why Mental Health First Aid?

- ❖ Mental health problems are common.
- ❖ Stigma is associated with mental health problems.
- ❖ Many people are not well informed about mental health problems.
- ❖ Professional help is not always on hand.
- ❖ People often do not know how to respond.
- ❖ People with mental health problems often do not seek help.

Why Mental Health First Aid Training?

Mental Health First Aid Certification teaches community members:

- ❖ Signs & symptoms of a MH crisis.
- ❖ What to do when a crisis is identified.
- ❖ What to say to help those in crisis.
- ❖ What **not** to say to those in crisis
- ❖ Where to refer people who are seeking help.

What is a Mental Health Disorder?

A mental disorder or mental illness is a diagnosable illness that:

- ❖ Affects a person's thinking, emotional state, and behavior.
- ❖ Disrupts the person's ability to:
 - Work
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships

Mental Health First Aid Certification in AZ

- ❖ Special Grant from SAMHSA.
- ❖ TOTs held in Tucson, Phoenix & Casa Grande.
- ❖ Total of 23 Trainers in 8 Cenpatico counties.
- ❖ Website registration page will be set up.
- ❖ Trainings will be free to start.
- ❖ When funding exhausted, minimal charge may apply.

The Impact of Mental Illness

- ❖ Mental illnesses can be more disabling than many chronic physical illnesses. For example:
 - The disability from moderate depression is similar to the impact from relapsing multiple sclerosis, severe asthma, or chronic hepatitis B.
 - The disability from severe post-traumatic stress disorder is comparable to the disability from paraplegia.

The Impact of Mental Illness

- ❖ “Disability” refers to the amount of disruption a health problem causes to a person’s ability to
 - Work
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships

Mental Health First Aid Certification

Mental health Certification Training includes discussion and exercises on the following:

- ❖ Understanding Depression
- ❖ Non Suicidal Injury
- ❖ Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors
- ❖ Understanding Anxiety Disorders & Panic Attacks
- ❖ Substance Use Disorders
- ❖ Eating Disorders
- ❖ Psychotic Disorders
- ❖ Understanding Schizophrenia

Sample of Interactive Exercise

- ❖ Psychosis Video and discussion

What helps vs. What hurts

Exercise: Auditory Hallucinations

The Pain of Depression Video

Discussion: Signs of Depression

Certification includes:

Training and exercises for each topic on the following:

- ❖ Mental Health First Aid Action Plan
- ❖ Signs & Symptoms
- ❖ Using your Mental Health First Aid Training
- ❖ Meet ALGEE

Meet ALGEE

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



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Adapted from Mental Health First Aid Australia
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Helpful Websites

CenpaticoAZ.com

TheNationalCouncil.org

SAMHSA.gov

NIMH.NIH.gov

Contact Info

Melinda Vasquez

MeVasquez@CenpaticoAZ.com

866-495-6738 x26105

480-317-6505

