



Mental Health First Aid Training Programme

The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training Programme for Northern Ireland has been adapted from the original MHFA programme established in Australia by Betty Kitchener and Anthony Jorm. MHFA is the help provided to a person who is developing a mental health problem or who is currently in a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until professional help is available or until the crisis resolves. More than 4,500 people have attended MHFA training in Northern Ireland since it began in 2009 following a successful pilot in 2005.

The aims of MHFA are to:

- preserve life where a person may be a danger to themselves or others;
- provide help to prevent the mental health problem becoming more serious;
- promote the recovery of good mental health;
- provide comfort to a person experiencing a mental health problem.

MHFA teaches participants:

- how to recognise the symptoms of mental health problems;
- how to provide initial help;
- how to go about guiding a person towards appropriate professional help.

The training programme is available to people from all backgrounds and has proved successful with different professional groups. MHFA training involves teaching participants how to recognise the symptoms of mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and psychosis. Each course is delivered by two MHFA instructors, usually over two consecutive days and four sessions to a maximum of 20 delegates. The course can also be delivered one day a week for two weeks or in four three-hour sessions. To apply for the training programme, people should contact

their local Health and Social care Trust. Each Trust runs MHFA training several times a year.

Topics covered include:

- What is meant by mental health/mental ill health?
- Dealing with crisis situations such as suicidal behaviour, self-harm, panic attacks and acute psychotic behaviour.
- Recognising the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems including depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis and substance use disorders.
- Where and how to get help.
- Self help strategies.

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Details

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General public

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