

Mental Health First Aid Workbook



Online



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Introduction to the Online Mental Health First Aid course

Course overview

Welcome to the Online Mental Health First Aid course which has been adapted from our Adult Two Day Mental Health First Aid classroom course.

By taking this course, you are joining a community of over half a million people in England and over three million people worldwide who are trained in mental health first aid skills and help others find the support they need. It is this community who will achieve our vision of a society where mental health is accepted as a normal part of life and where everyone has the skills to look after their own and other people's wellbeing.

The Online Mental Health First Aid course is interactive and is delivered through slides, video clips, activities, discussion and case studies, which you will explore through individual learning activities and a series of live sessions.

Individual learning will be based on a combination of videos, reading and activities. These can be done at your own pace in advance of each live session on the MHFA Online Learning Hub.

The live sessions are led by one of our approved MHFA England Instructor Members. You will be joined by up to 16 other participants who will be completing the course with you. Check details of the timings of each live session in your booking confirmation and make a note as these sessions will not be recorded or repeated.

Everyone who completes the course gets a certificate from MHFA England to say they are a Mental Health First Aider.

If you require any clarification or support at any point, then get in touch with your MHFA Instructor via the Online Learning Hub or through contact details you were provided on registration.

Live session topics

Live session 1: Introduction to the course and Mental Health First Aid

Why Mental Health First Aid?
The Mental Health First Aid action plan
What is mental health?
Impact of mental health issues
Stigma and discrimination

Live session 2: First Aid for suicidal crisis and depression

What is depression?
Symptoms of depression
Risk factors for depression
Depression in the workplace
Suicide figures
Alcohol, drugs and mental health
First aid for suicidal crisis
Non-judgemental listening skills
First aid for depression
Treatment and resources for depression
Self-care

Live session 3: Anxiety, personality disorders, eating disorders, and self-harm

What is an anxiety disorder?
First aid for anxiety disorders
Crisis first aid after a traumatic event
Alcohol, drugs and anxiety disorders
Treatment and resources for anxiety disorders
Cognitive distortions and CBT
Personality disorders
Eating disorders
Self-harm

Live session 4: Psychosis, recovery, and Mental Health First Aid action planning

What is psychosis?
Risk factors for psychosis
Alcohol, drugs and psychosis
Schizophrenia
Bipolar disorder
Warning signs of developing psychosis
Crisis first aid for acute psychosis
Treatment and resources for psychosis
Recovery and building resources
Action planning for using Mental Health First Aid

Safety procedure

Looking after yourself on the course

It is important to recognise that this course covers material which you may find emotionally upsetting. Your self-care is important and your safety throughout is our priority.

- Don't do or say anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- In the live session, if you feel that you need to step away at any point, please privately message the instructor so that they can provide you support. The instructor will be in touch with you during a break or after the session. You can step out of the session in this way at any time.
- If you need to take more than a 10–15 minute break from the session, or you will not be re-joining the session, please let the instructor know.

We would also like you to identify someone who could potentially support you during or after the course if you need it. If you are attending with people that you know, then you may want to buddy up with them. Please take some time to identify this person before the course starts.

My identified support person is:

The MHFA Online Learning Hub

The Online Learning Hub is where you will be able to:

- Complete the individual learning activities
- Chat with the other course participants
- Join live events
- Contact your course instructor

You should have received an email from 'MHFA England Online Learning Hub'

inviting you to register to the Online Learning Hub. Once you have signed up and logged in, you will see that you have been assigned to the Online Mental Health First Aid course.

The course will direct you through all the individual learning activities. Make sure to complete all the activities you need to in advance of each live session. Once a live session has taken place, the next set of activities you need to complete will be made available.

The activities include reading through pages of your MHFA Course Manual, watching videos and answering some reflective questions. Ensure you allow enough time to complete these activities between sessions.

We estimate that the individual learning activities for each session are as follows:

Session 1: 1 hour

Session 2: 1 hour 30min

Session 3: 2 hours

Session 4: 2 hours

If you require any clarification or support at any point, then get in touch with your MHFA Instructor.

Using this workbook

This workbook is for you to use during the live sessions, so make sure you have it with you. You will find activities, instructions and case studies that will help you to participate in the activities, and will be able to make notes that will help you to remember and reflect on after the live session is over.

Attending live sessions

The live sessions are focused on advancing your knowledge with the support of an MHFA Instructor Member and are an opportunity for practising your mental health first aid skills with other learners.

The first session will introduce you to your instructor, other learners on the course, and some of the fundamental concepts that underpin Mental Health First Aid. It is also an opportunity to make sure that all your equipment is working and ask any questions about the course.

Accessing the live sessions

- You will need either a laptop or a computer with a webcam and microphone, and a stable internet connection.
- Log onto the Online Learning Hub using your email address and your chosen password and log into the Online Mental Health First Aid course that you have been assigned to. The live session will start 15min before the advertised start time. When the live session is active, you will see a camera icon flashing in your menu options in the top right-hand corner.
- When you join the live session, you will be prompted to join with your camera and microphone. This will be required for you to be able to fully participate in the live session activities.
- Exit other applications and windows on your computer where possible.

Preparing for the live session

- Ensure you have completed all the individual learning activities in advance of the live session as the instructor will be building on the knowledge. Prepare any questions you have about the content that you need clarification on. If you haven't completed any activities it may be difficult to participate in the skills practice in the session.

- Bring this workbook with you as there are some activities that will require you to read from or write in it during the session.
- Find a quiet space – minimise background noise by turning off the television and radio, and consider using headphones for the course audio.
- Try not to sit directly in front of or beside a bright light source, or else all the group will see is your shadow. It will be important for the instructor to be able to see you during the course.
- Try to place yourself away from any distractions and turn mobile phones off or put them on silent once you have successfully joined the online session.

Live session Group Agreement:

- We keep to time
- We respect each other's views
- Confidentiality – personal details shared on this course remain on this course; don't identify anyone you discuss
- Opt-out/personal safety – don't do or say anything that makes you feel uncomfortable
- No such thing as a silly question – ask if you don't understand
- Try to get involved if you feel comfortable
- Enjoy the course – it is a serious subject matter, but we can enjoy learning

A wooden play structure with colorful rings in the background. The structure is made of dark wood and has several horizontal slats. In the background, there are several large, colorful rings in shades of yellow, green, and pink, arranged in a circular pattern. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the text being the primary focus.

Live session 1:

Introduction to the course and
Mental Health First Aid

Activity 1: Mental ill health and language

(to be completed in live session)

The purpose of this exercise is to discover acceptable language that can be used to discuss and describe mental ill health and the judgemental and negative phrases to avoid.

Click the sentences below that are neutral, positive and acceptable terms when used to describe mental ill health.

“A mental health problem”

“Suffering from depression”

“She is bipolar, so she is going to need time off work”

“A person who self-harms”

“They are a victim of trauma”

“They are mentally unstable”

“They are a psychiatric survivor”

“They are disturbed”

“A current diagnosis of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)”

“They are experiencing bipolar”

“They are accessing support”

“They are living with general anxiety disorder”

“Completed suicide”

“They are a self-harmer and may need access to support services”

“They are afflicted with schizophrenia”

“Taking happy pills”

“They’ve had a mental breakdown”

“Their relative committed suicide”

“A person with lived experience of trauma”

“Experiencing depression”

Live session 1: Introduction to the course and Mental Health First Aid

Write down some notes to feedback to the group:

Which 3 do your group agree are neutral or positive?

1.

2.

3.

Which 3 do your group agree are judgemental?

1.

2.

3.

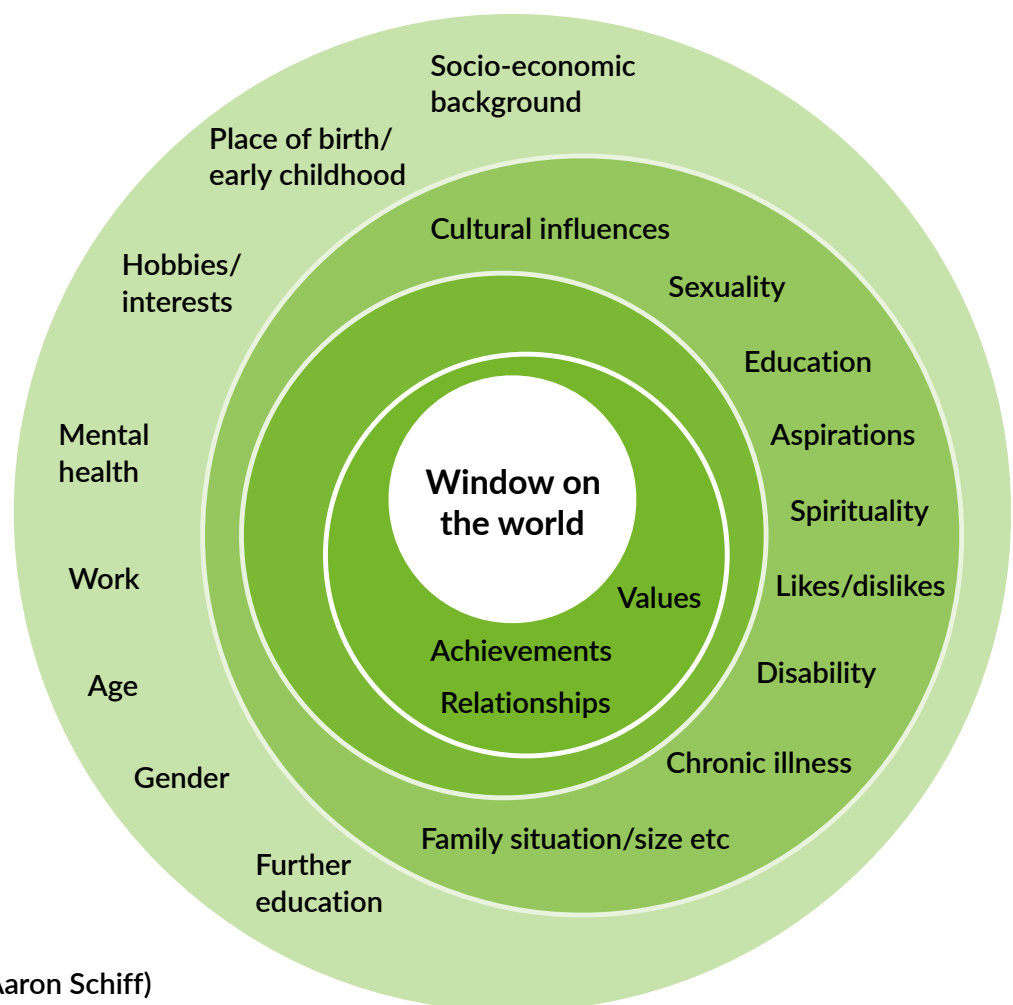
Which were your group unsure about?

Activity 2: Frame of Reference

The Frame of Reference is the term used by Jacqui and Aaron Schiff to refer to our individual filter on reality. They defined it as “The structure of associated responses which provide the individual with an overall perceptual, conceptual, affective and action set which is used to define the self, other people and the world.” What this means is that the ways we all make sense of the world, of other people and ourselves, including our feelings, beliefs and behaviours, are unique to each and every one of us, and shaped by our past experiences and beliefs. We all see things slightly differently, and so we treat ourselves and other people differently, too.

Our individual Frame of Reference is influenced by a range of factors from our upbringing and experience. These include our family situation, education, culture and life experiences. This can be shown by our ‘window on the world’ by taking a flipchart and drawing a square in the middle surrounded by factors that have moulded our beliefs.

The example here shows the kind of factors that can be included.



(Source: Jacqui and Aaron Schiff)

Live session 1: Introduction to the course and Mental Health First Aid

Think about your own Frame of Reference using the list of factors here and reflect on the questions below:

Place of birth/childhood

Hobbies/interests

Mental health

Work

Values

Achievements

Age

Disability

Relationships

Gender

Education

Like/dislikes

Family situation/size

Chronic illness

Aspirations

Nationality

Citizenship status

Cultural influences

Sexuality

Socio-economic background

Other

1. How do you feel your Frame of Reference may impact your attitudes and beliefs?

.....

2. How might your Frame of Reference limit you in non-judgemental listening?

.....

3. How might your Frame of Reference help you with non-judgemental listening?

.....

Activity 3: The Mental Health Continuum

(to be completed in live session)

Reflect on and clarify how mental health changes over time and in relation to different situations and life stages.

1. Read the case studies below.
2. Decide where Sanjit, Carla, Steve and Louise fit on the continuum above and write each name in one of the four quadrants.
3. Each one has shifted from another quadrant in the last year or two. Draw an arrow to show the movement from the quadrant where they started from to where they end up.

Sanjit is a second-year university student. He has settled well into university life, and after feeling homesick for the first two weeks, he is now enjoying the independence of living in a shared flat. He works hard at his studies but plays hard too. He enjoys sports, social evenings with his friends and playing computer games. When he first arrived at university, he tended to drink too much and sleep too little. However, experience showed him that this made him less motivated and more anxious than usual, so he made some small changes to his social life so that it did not interfere too much with his studies.

Carla has two small children. When her first baby arrived, she was very happy and enjoyed caring for the baby and meeting other mothers. When the second baby arrived less than a year later, Carla was diagnosed with postnatal depression. Recently her partner left her, telling her that her moods were impossible to live with. Carla is struggling to manage motherhood and all the responsibility for their home. Her parents have tried to help but she becomes angry and moody because she fears they are interfering.

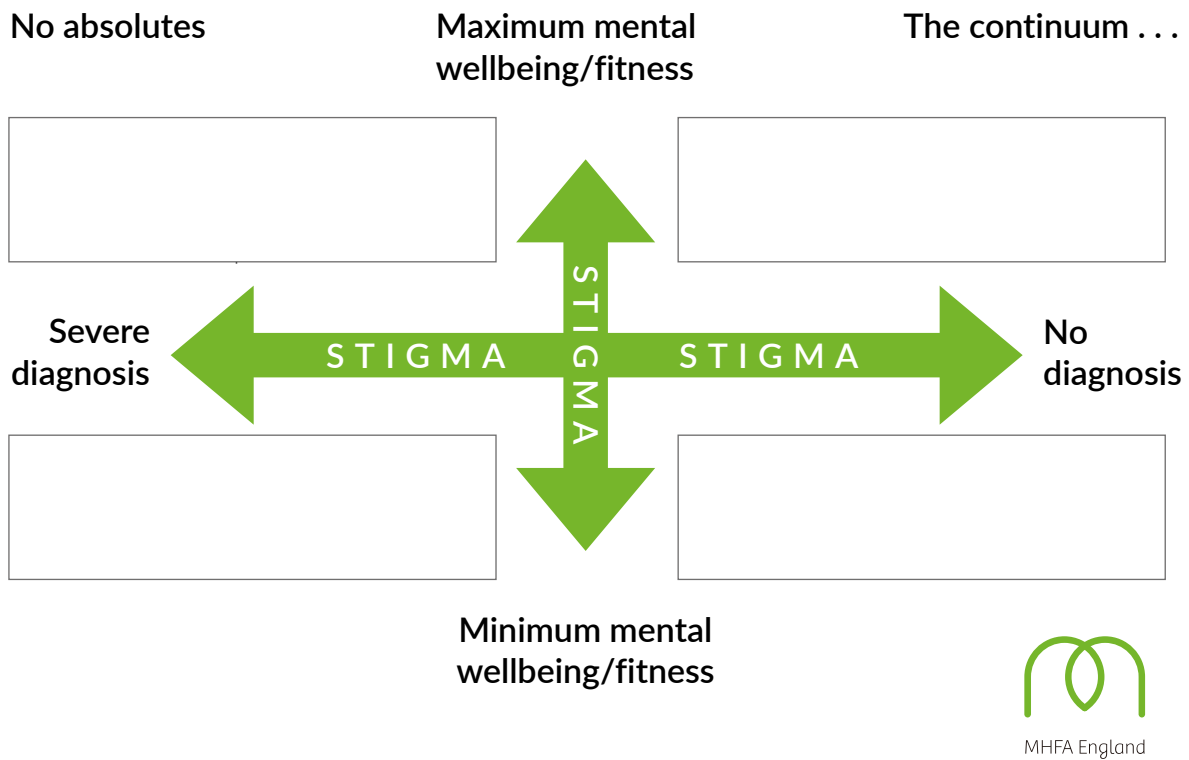
Carla's self-esteem is low and she is afraid that if she goes back to the doctor to say that the antidepressants she is taking don't seem to be working, the social workers might take her children into care. Recently she has started to believe that they might be better off without her and imagining what it would be like to simply stop living.

Steve was diagnosed with bipolar disorder ten years ago. At first, he struggled with the diagnosis and felt angry with everyone. He would often stop taking his medication because he hated the thought he might need to take it for life. As he has come to terms with his diagnosis, experience has shown Steve that he can work with his psychiatrist and community psychiatric nurse to manage his medication and make the best use of support when he needs it. At the moment he is very well and enjoying the challenge of his work and being part of a local football team. He has developed a Crisis Card so that those close to him know what to do if he is unwell again.

For instance, if he becomes unwell, his best friend knows to take his car keys away, and because this is written on his card, he can point this out to Steve if necessary. Steve's family and friends love his quirky humour and his creativity. He has come to realise that bipolar disorder makes him unique and gives him a view of the world that other people may not have. It has also given him a great deal of empathy with others who are struggling with difficult life events.

Live session 1: Introduction to the course and Mental Health First Aid

Louise has always thought of herself as an easy-going kind of person who doesn't experience many mood swings. Until recently, her friends thought of her as someone who was easy to get along with. A few months ago, a new manager was recruited in her department. The new manager is bad-tempered and looks for people to blame whenever a problem occurs. He has been particularly hard on Louise because she had to take a few days off work with a nasty virus. He has made it clear in team meetings that he thinks people who stay off sick with viruses are a waste of space. Louise is becoming increasingly unhappy at work and feels very stressed. She isn't sleeping well and has become irritable and anxious. On Sunday evenings she feels depressed at the thought of the week ahead. She has started working from home as much as possible and often joins meetings without her camera or microphone on, saying she has WiFi issues.



Notes