



Mental Health **FIRST AID**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

Instructor Policy Handbook **2023**

Updated: Jan. 10, 2023

Dear Instructor,

Thank you for being a Mental Health First Aid Instructor! Our Instructors are the heart of this vital program. Your commitment will help countless people gain the knowledge and tools to identify, understand and respond to those experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

Please review the policies in this handbook thoroughly to ensure your compliance with the program.

The National Council for Mental Wellbeing values your unique talents and abilities! Before you teach your first session, I encourage you to reflect on your own passion for mental wellbeing. As an Instructor, you play such an important role in the lives of those experiencing mental health and substance use challenges, largely because you teach others how to offer help. As you lean into that role, I believe you will become a more enthusiastic, effective Instructor.

Thank you for your dedication to mental wellbeing and substance use awareness. I wish you the best of luck on your journey as a Mental Health First Aid Instructor!

Sincerely,



Deanna Roepke

Chief Program Officer

National Council for Mental Wellbeing

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I. Using the Instructor Policy Handbook

A. Purpose

This handbook provides all Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) USA Instructors the most up-to-date Instructor policies and procedures. Every Instructor must review this document in its entirety before delivering courses. Coordinators should also be familiar with these policies to fully support the Instructors for whom they coordinate.

B. Adhering to Policies

Upon certification to teach any MHFA course type, regardless of delivery method, Instructors must agree to adhere to all policies and procedures outlined in this Instructor Policy Handbook.

C. Communicating Policy Updates

Mental Health First Aid USA reserves the right to update or add policies to this handbook at any time. Instructors will be notified of changes through official MHFA emails or newsletters and/or on MHFA Connect.

D. Enforcement

Mental Health First Aid USA takes Instructor policies seriously and reserves the right to investigate policy violations and false representations. Failure to adhere to any policy will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Gross misconduct and policy violations could result in suspension or revocation of Instructor certification.

II. Instructor Certification Status

A. Certified

“Certified” status indicates an Instructor may deliver Mental Health First Aid courses without a co-Instructor. Instructor candidates must receive a score of 70% or higher on the Instructor Teach-back Rubric portion of their Instructor Training to be certified.

B. Provisionally Certified

Adult and Youth Instructor Candidates who receive “Provisionally Certified” status have scored between 60% and 69% on the Instructor Teach-back Rubric during their Instructor Training and must complete additional requirements to attain full certification. (See Item C under Instructor Annual Certification Requirements.) Provisionally Certified Instructors must teach with a fully Certified co-Instructor until they have completed all provisional requirements and become fully certified. Instructors with Provisionally Certified status may teach with this status for up to one year.

Instructor Candidates who receive a provisional score during their teach-back will be notified of their provisional status by their National Trainer. The National Trainer will also provide the Instructor with additional information and resources for becoming a fully certified Instructor.

teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA): There is no provisional status for tMHFA Instructors.

Instructors must receive a score of 70% or higher on their teach-back rubric to be certified. Instructors who receive below a 70% are offered an opportunity to re-do their teach-back for a passing score.

C. Quality Evaluation Provisional

Instructors with “Quality Evaluation Provisional” status have received post-evaluation scores below 4.0 on a scale of 1 to 5. Mental Health First Aid USA will work with the individual Instructor to develop a customized improvement plan to return them to Certified status. MHFA USA staff will provide additional information and resources to any Instructor placed on Quality Evaluation Provisional status.

D. Decertified

An Instructor who does not meet annual certification requirements will be decertified and prohibited from teaching any Mental Health First Aid courses in any capacity. A decertified Instructor can pursue reinstatement by successfully completing a new 3-day Instructor certification course. The decertified Instructor must apply, be accepted and pay any related fees. They will be subject to the same standards as a new Instructor.

E. Suspended

Mental Health First Aid USA will suspend an Instructor, when necessary, to investigate misconduct or a policy violation. During a suspension, the Instructor is prohibited from teaching any MHFA courses. Mental Health First Aid USA will issue a determination of status within 30 days of the suspension.

F. Revoked

When certification is revoked, the Instructor loses all MHFA certifications. They are no longer permitted to teach MHFA courses and must cease claiming any affiliation with Mental Health First Aid USA as an Instructor. Any Instructor whose certification is revoked is ineligible for reinstatement.

III. Instructor Annual Certification Requirements

Newly Certified Instructors should allow up to 40 hours post-certification to become familiar with the content of the entire course.

A. Annual Single Certification Requirement

Adult and Youth MHFA

Unless otherwise noted by the National Council, Instructors must teach a minimum of three courses per anniversary year.

Note: Community-specific MHFA courses can be used to fulfill the annual teaching requirement.

tMHFA

Certified tMHFA Instructors are required to teach a minimum of one course per anniversary year. Please note, only two Instructors can receive credit for a single course.

B. Annual Dual Certification Requirement

Adult and Youth MHFA

Instructors must teach a minimum of three courses per anniversary year with at least one course from each curriculum (Adult and Youth).

tMHFA

The tMHFA annual certification requirement of teaching one tMHFA course per year is separate from the annual certification requirements for Adult and Youth MHFA. Dual or triple certified Instructors (i.e., those that are certified as tMHFA Instructors and Adult or Youth MHFA Instructors) must teach one tMHFA course and teach their three courses per year for their Adult and Youth MHFA certification to maintain all their certifications.

C. Provisional Certification Requirements

Please note, there is no provisional status for tMHFA Instructors.

Instructors with provisional status may co-teach with this status for up to one year while they complete the steps to become fully certified.

To become fully certified, provisional Instructors must complete the following requirements:

1. Watch the Instructional Video Series for the appropriate curriculum on MHFA Connect.
2. Co-teach a minimum of one course.
3. Pass the Provisional Instructor final exam.

D. Instructor Responsibility for Maintaining Certification

The Mental Health First Aid Instructor certification is owned by the individual Instructor and is not property of any organization that might have sponsored the Instructor's certification. The Instructor is independently responsible for meeting all certification requirements.

E. Extensions

Instructors who have not successfully completed their recertification requirement by their anniversary date may request a 3-month extension, a request that Mental Health First Aid USA may or may not grant. To be considered, requests must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the anniversary date using the Extension Request Form found on MHFA Connect.

If the request is accepted, the Instructor's anniversary will be updated to the date they successfully complete the recertification requirements.

If an Instructor does not meet the extension requirements, they will be decertified and must complete the reinstatement process to teach Mental Health First Aid. MHFA USA reserves the right to deny extension requests.

IV. Instructor Quality Evaluation Process

To help Instructors reach their full potential and teach the best course possible, Mental Health First Aid USA will regularly review the post-evaluation scores of courses. After reviewing low post-evaluation scores (below 4.0), MHFA may place an Instructor on "Quality Evaluation Provisional" status.

MHFA USA will work with an individual Instructor to develop a customized improvement plan. The additional resources that may be part of the process include, but are not limited to, a combination of any of the following:

- Participating in a one-on-one coaching call with a MHFA staff member.
- Participating in a group coaching call.
- Co-facilitating a training with a seasoned Instructor.
- Watching Instructional Training Videos on MHFA Connect.
- Completing a reflection activity related to an area of improvement.

V. Dual Certification and MHFA Community-specific Course Considerations

Instructors may carry certifications in more than one MHFA curriculum. Specific assumptions apply as stated below:

- **For Dual Adult/Youth Certification**
 - Instructors are required to teach one course in their first curriculum before becoming certified in the second.

- **To Become Certified to Teach in Another Language**
 - At this time, MHFA Adult and Youth courses can be taught in English or Spanish. Instructors may obtain a dual certification for language but should teach in the first language they've been certified in before earning a certification in another language. For example, if an Instructor is initially certified to teach in English, they should teach a course in English before applying for certification in MHFA for Spanish-speaking Communities.
- **For MHFA Community-Specific Courses**
 - MHFA recommends teaching two MHFA courses (Youth or Adult, as appropriate) before applying to teach a MHFA Community-Specific course.

Adult and Youth MHFA Community-Specific Courses are packages of resources that reframe the standard 7.5-hour In-person course for Adult MHFA Instructors to be more relevant to a specific audience.

Instructors must have knowledge and experience with the target audience as specified in each Community-specific course. We also recommend Instructors teach two courses in their foundation curriculum (e.g., Adult MHFA) prior to obtaining any supplemental course certifications. Community-specific courses only apply to the specified MHFA curriculum and are not to be incorporated with another MHFA curriculum. Available Community-specific courses include (as of December 2022):

- Adult MHFA for Higher Education
- Adult MHFA for Fire and EMS
- Adult MHFA for Law Enforcement, Corrections and Public Safety
- Adult MHFA for Veterans, Service Members, and their Families
- Adult MHFA for Older Adults
- Adult MHFA for Rural Communities
- Youth MHFA for Tribal Communities and Indigenous Peoples
- Adult MHFA for Spanish-speaking Communities (In-person and Blended)
- Youth MHFA for Spanish-speaking Communities (In-person and Blended)

VI. Becoming Certified in teen MHFA as an Adult or Youth Instructor

Any school, youth-serving organization or organization in partnership with a school that wants to bring tMHFA training to their teens can apply to become a tMHFA Site. Interested schools and organizations must be accepted as a tMHFA site before they teach tMHFA.

If you are interested in bringing tMHFA to teens in your community, visit the Mental Health First Aid website to complete the tMHFA Interest Form. A member of the MHFA team will reach out to schedule a call with you to discuss the program and begin your application.

The MHFA team member will ask if you are able to meet a set of tMHFA implementation requirements (see the [tMHFA webpage](#)). Interested schools and organizations will need to sign a contract to show

their commitment to teaching the program with fidelity and adhering to the implementation requirements.

VII. Instructor Profile

Instructors are required to actively maintain their Instructor profiles. Please notify the National Council via the Request Assistance Form if you need to change your email address. The National Council communicates important programmatic information via email, so it is critical that Instructors ensure their email address is accurate. All other information can easily be updated through MHFA Connect.

VIII. Delivering Mental Health First Aid USA Courses

A. Instructor Professionalism and Conduct

Instructors are ambassadors of the Mental Health First Aid program and must always maintain professional conduct. Instructor professionalism and conduct is defined as:

- Establish and sustain a safe and nonjudgmental learning environment for learners.
- Openly respect alternate viewpoints.
- Lead with empathy and compassion.

B. Course Instruction

MHFA courses may be facilitated by one or two certified Instructors. No more than two Instructors are permitted to teach any MHFA course. Non-certified Instructors may not teach the course.

C. Course Size and Format

Adult and Youth MHFA

Instructors should present to groups of a size they are comfortable managing that also has enough learners to foster group discussion. The minimum course size is five learners, and the maximum course size for all course delivery options (Blended and In-person) is 30 learners.

Instructors may include in their annual Instructor recertification renewal ONE course in which five or more learners were enrolled, but fewer than five attended. The remaining two classes required for Instructor recertification must have five or more learners in attendance.

tMHFA

MHFA USA recommends that In-person tMHFA course sizes stay within the range of five to 30 teens.

This is a guideline. Courses with fewer than five teens and larger than 30 teens can take place and will count towards an Instructor's annual recertification requirement. However, assembly-style sessions are strictly prohibited, because the course is intended to be discussion-based. Instructors are encouraged to stay within the standard classroom sizes of the school or organization.

For Blended tMHFA courses, MHFA USA recommends a minimum of five teens and maximum of 20 teens in a virtual Instructor-led session to ensure that Instructors can monitor and support teens effectively in the virtual environment.

Courses must be taught on non-consecutive days, with no more than two weeks between sessions.

D. Addition/Deletion of Course Information

Mental Health First Aid is a standardized, evidence-based course. Instructors are required to teach the course with “fidelity” – a term MHFA USA uses to describe the measures needed to ensure core elements that make the MHFA program effective remain intact. Instructors may not insert or change course content material, including adding new information, data, presentation slides or any other alterations.

E. Use of Instructor Materials

Instructors are required to use the most current course materials and may not use or distribute out-of-date materials. When materials are revised, Instructors will have ample time to review and acquire the updated materials. Regardless of certification status, Instructors may not reproduce any documents, handbooks, books, information or other materials provided in full or in part without express written permission from Mental Health First Aid USA. This extends to any materials provided during Instructor training courses.

The only course document that may be printed without express written permission is the Participant Processing Guide. Only the learner assigned this document may print this document.

F. Registering Courses via MHFA Connect vs. Submitting data via MHFA Connect Submit-a-Course

Instructors are required to register all courses they deliver in Mental Health First Aid Connect or submit course data via MHFA Connect Submit-a-Course, regardless of whether it is open to the public. An Instructor must register the class or submit course data to receive credit toward their annual recertification requirement. **Only courses registered in MHFA Connect or submitted via the MHFA Connect Submit-a-Course will count toward annual certification requirements.**

All tMHFA courses, including In-person and Blended courses, must be managed through the Submit-a-Course process.

MHFA USA encourages Instructors to register their courses as soon as they are scheduled, ideally at least two weeks prior to the delivery date, to allow ample time for learners to complete any preparation or required pre-work (if applicable). Registering courses within five days of the course may diminish the learner’s experience. Late access to any preparation or pre-work (if applicable for the course delivery type) could limit the Instructor’s ability to establish and maintain fidelity to the content.

Ensure that course registration and course submission entries contain accurate, specific and complete information. For example, include the specific start and end times as well as the exact location. If you are delivering a specific Adult MHFA Community-specific course, make sure it is accurately listed.

When managing course delivery through MHFA Connect, Instructors must add courses before they

take place, and they must ensure learners complete all required course assignments. Only learners who are enrolled in the course prior to when the course takes place and complete all required course assignments will be eligible for a First Aider certificate. Instructors may not mark attendees complete in any course or course module they have not completed in full.

G. Scheduling Courses

Adult and Youth MHFA

- In-Person Courses
 - Instructors scheduling a course must allow for the designated number of hours for instruction, plus breaks and lunch. Courses scheduled over multiple days must not occur more than two weeks apart.
 - Suggested options for in-person course scheduling include. Please see the timing guide in your teaching notes to help with scheduling:
 - Adult In-person Courses
 - **One day:** One 7.5-hour day
 - **Two days:** One 3.5-hour day and one 4-hour day
 - **Four days:** Four 2-hour days
 - Youth In-person Courses
 - **One day:** One 6.5-hour day
 - **Two days:** One 3.5-hour day and one 3-hour day
 - **Four days:** Four 2-hour days
- Blended Courses
 - Instructors scheduling a course must allow the designated number of hours for the Instructor-led training portion of their Blended course, and they should also include time for breaks or lunch.
 - Blended Adult MHFA with In-person Instructor-led training (ILT) – Courses include approximately two hours of pre-work and 5.5 hours ILT content; allow an additional 30 minutes for breaks.
 - Blended Adult MHFA with Virtual ILT – Courses include approximately two hours of pre-work and 5.5 hours ILT content; allow one additional hour for breaks.
 - Blended Youth MHFA with In-person ILT – Courses include approximately two hours of pre-work and 4.5 hours ILT content; allow an additional 30 minutes for breaks.
 - Blended Youth MHFA with Virtual ILT – Courses include approximately two hours of pre-work and 4.5 hours ILT content; allow one additional hour for breaks.
 - Blended courses with in-person or virtual ILT can be scheduled for a maximum

of two separate sessions.

- To reschedule an Instructor-led session in MHFA Connect, change the date and time of the Instructor-led session module within the course.

tMHFA

In-person tMHFA

There are currently two in-person learning options for tMHFA:

- Six 45-minute sessions – conducted on non-consecutive days with no more than two weeks between sessions.
- Three 90-minute sessions – conducted on non-consecutive days with no more than two weeks between sessions

Completion of the course is defined as attendance in all Instructor-led sessions, therefore, only teens who attend all Instructor-led sessions will receive a certificate.

For this reason, scheduling make-up sessions for teens that are absent is strongly encouraged. Schedule make-up sessions outside of MHFA Connect, coordinating dates and times directly with the teens who need to attend. Refrain from recording the teen's attendance in the session that was missed in MHFA Connect until they've attended a make-up session.

Blended tMHFA

The sole Blended learning option for tMHFA consists of six sessions. Within each session, teens participate in:

- tMHFA Self-paced work: Instructors help teens in Blended classes access these sessions. Each self-paced work directs teens to reference additional content in the tMHFA manual and prepares them for the corresponding Instructor-led session with the base knowledge to support the discussion and activities. Lessons introduce teens to foundational content including an overview of the tMHFA Action Plan and key definitions such as mental health and mental health challenge.
- tMHFA Instructor-led Sessions: Instructors facilitate these sessions in person or via videoconference. Instructors use the tMHFA Blended Teaching Notes to guide the sessions, which build on the content teens learned in the corresponding self-paced work. Instructors can review the content, respond to questions and then facilitate discussions that make the information relevant to the teens. Instructors guide teens through activities that allow them to practice skills such as having a supportive conversation with a friend and using the tMHFA Action Plan. Instructors may use any videoconferencing platform of their choosing.
- Skill-Building Scenarios: Three animated skill-building scenarios help teens apply and practice their tMHFA skills. Teens “meet” virtual peers and use the tMHFA Action Plan to help them navigate difficult situations.

Completion of the course is defined as completion of all components of the course – including self-paced work, Instructor-led sessions and skills-building scenarios. Only teens who attend all Instructor-led sessions will receive a tMHFA certificate, so scheduling make-up sessions for teens who are absent is strongly encouraged. Schedule make-up sessions outside of MHFA Connect, coordinating directly with the teens that need to attend a session on dates and times. Refrain from

recording the teen's attendance in the session that was missed in MHFA Connect until after they've attended a make-up session.

IX. Marketing Courses

A variety of marketing resources are available on the [Resources page](#) of MHFA Connect – you can select **Marketing** from the category dropdown menu to narrow your results. These items include customizable resources such as a press release template, one-pager templates, social media templates and a PowerPoint presentation to help you discuss your MHFA offerings with members of your community.

If you need to make additional support materials to promote your course, you must adhere to our brand guidelines, which, along with MHFA logos, are available on the resources page of MHFA Connect.

The [MHFA Connect Storefront](#) has merchandise such as banners, pens and stickers to help you market your course.

Please do not develop your own MHFA merchandise (such as, plush toys, bobble-head dolls, bumper stickers, T-shirts). If there is an item you feel our storefront is missing, please submit your suggestion via the **Request Assistance form**. To find the form, go to the [Resources page](#) under the Primary Navigation Menu of MHFA Connect, and select **Request Forms** from the category filter dropdown.

Short sections of a course, up to three minutes in length, may be videotaped, with permission of the Instructor(s) and learners, for marketing or journalistic purposes.

X. Pricing

Instructors are responsible for setting and collecting their own course fees and should make every effort to ensure prices are set to promote accessibility. Regardless of the actual price of the course, MHFA requires Instructors and Coordinators communicate that the course has a value of \$170 per learner. When an Instructor offers a discounted or no-cost course, promotional materials must acknowledge that learner fees are being underwritten. An example of such language is: "This course is valued at \$170. Thanks to a generous donation from ABC Organization, learners may attend at no charge."

XI. Course Cancellations and Refunds

Adult and Youth MHFA

Learner Refunds:

Instructors may set their own policies for cancellations and refunds to learners. Mental Health First Aid USA encourages Instructors to include cancellation and refund policies in course promotional materials. Cancellation information should include the mechanism for contacting learners (phone, email or text). If the Instructor institutes a refund policy for learners, they should indicate the conditions under which a refund would be issued, the amount of the refund and the length of time it would take to receive the refund. If there is no cancellation or refund policy, it should be clearly stated.

Instructor Refunds:

MHFA USA does not process refunds for any unused materials. For blended courses, Instructors will be invoiced based on the Instructor-led training roster, which must be submitted within 48 hours of course completion. If the roster is not submitted within 48 hours of course completion, the Instructor will be invoiced for all registered participants listed on the course roster and will need to request any necessary refunds via the MHFA Request Assistance Form.

Instructors teaching Blended courses via Submit-a-Course are invoiced based on the number of learners that completed the Instructor-led training session per their course submission form.

tMHFA

tMHFA Sites are responsible for purchasing tMHFA manuals for each teen they plan to teach prior to the course. Regardless of whether the course is in-person or blended, every teen must receive a physical manual. tMHFA Sites should ensure they have enough manuals for each teen taking the course. MHFA USA does not process refunds for unused tMHFA manuals.

XII. Unenrolling Learners From a Blended Course

Adult, Youth and teen MHFA

Learners taking Blended courses are assigned self-paced work as part of their required course assignments. If a learner is unenrolled from a course, any amount of coursework they have completed up to that point will be lost. If the learner chooses to enroll in a future course, the Instructor can submit an MHFA Request Assistance Form to ask for the self-paced work portion of the learner's course assignment be marked as complete. Evaluations and examinations will need to be recompleted by the learner once enrolled in the future course. Please share this information with your learners as part of their course experience.

XIII. Learner Age

Adult and Youth MHFA

Learners must be 18 or older to participate in a Youth Adult Mental Health First Aid or Adult Mental Health First Aid course.

tMHFA

tMHFA is designed for teens in grades 10-12 or ages 15-18. Grade 9 and university-level students are not permitted to participate in tMHFA.

XIV. Instructor Age

Applicants must be 18 years of age to be considered for entry into an Instructor Training.

XV. Copyright for Materials

All Mental Health First Aid course material is the copyright of Mental Health First Aid International

and cannot be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the proper permission of the original copyright holder. “Course documents” also incorporates materials from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. The added content is owned and copyrighted by the National Council and cannot be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted, or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the proper permission from the National Council. No part of any related publications may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means — electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise — without prior permission.

Mental Health First Aid USA is managed, operated, and disseminated by the:

- National Council for Mental Wellbeing
- Missouri Department of Mental Health
- Mental Health Association of Maryland

XVI. Distribution of Course Materials

Adult and Youth MHFA

Instructors are required to distribute the following to each learner:

- Participant Manual
- Participant Processing Guide (Blended courses only)
- Self-care Template (optional)
- Community Resource List
 - Instructors must create and provide an appropriate Community Resource List for each learner in a course.

tMHFA

- tMHFA Manual – a physical manual is required for all tMHFA courses, regardless of whether the course is in-person or blended. tMHFA Sites and Instructors are required to distribute the tMHFA manuals to teens.

There is no participant processing guide for tMHFA.

The distribution -- in any format -- of any Mental Health First Aid course PowerPoint Slide Deck, Teaching Notes and other instructional material is strictly prohibited.

XVII. Modification of Course Materials

A. Mental Health First Aid Course PowerPoint Slide Deck

Instructors are prohibited from modifying the Mental Health First Aid Course PowerPoint Slide Deck. However, an Instructor *may* add one slide at the front of the slide deck and/or one slide at the end of the slide deck. For example, adding a title page or contact page is permissible.

B. Community Resource List

Instructors are required to ensure that their Community Resource List is updated as needed with local mental wellbeing resources.

C. Course Scenarios

Instructors may make slight modifications to scenarios to better relate to the audience. Slight modifications include:

- Altering the name of the individual in the scenario.
- Altering the role or job of the individual in the scenario.
- Altering the environment or setting of scenarios.

XVIII. Use of Course Materials Outside of Mental Health First Aid Courses

Instructors are not permitted to use Mental Health First Aid course materials for any purpose other than delivering the MHFA course within the United States, its districts, territories, embassies and military bases.

XIX. Language Considerations

A. Content Interpretation and Translation

1. Currently, Mental Health First Aid Adult and Youth courses may be offered only in English and Spanish. An Instructor may teach the course in Spanish if they are fluent in Spanish and certified in the Mental Health First Aid for Spanish-speaking communities or Youth Mental Health First Aid for Spanish-speaking communities course. Please note, there is not currently a Spanish version of tMHFA.
2. Instructors may not translate the course into any other language. If an Instructor needs to translate a few key words to a learner to enhance their understanding, this is encouraged; however, they are not permitted to translate any of the course information or materials. Maintaining Mental Health First Aid's curriculum fidelity and quality is of the utmost importance, and this cannot be guaranteed without a formal process of translation and localization.

XX. Accessibility

A. Accessibility of Facility

Mental Health First Aid USA strives to make this training accessible to all. When choosing a location to hold courses, an Instructor should make every effort to find accessible spaces where public transportation is readily available. When conducting a virtual Instructor-led training, consider reviewing virtual engagement best practices. Please visit https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_III.htm for information about public space accessibility.

B. Accessibility of Curriculum

Mental Health First Aid is dedicated to making its curricula accessible to all. Mental Health First Aid has accessible versions of various portions of the curricula for Adult and Youth MHFA. Instructors who need to receive a copy should submit their request through the Request Assistance form on MHFA Connect.

C. Videotaping and Photography

Instructors are not permitted to allow videotaping of the course, photographing, screen recording or screen shots of the presentation slide deck. Short sections (up to three minutes) of a course may be videotaped for marketing or journalistic purposes, with permission of both the Instructor and learners. If a short section of the course is taped for any reason, Mental Health First Aid USA suggests Instructors obtain signatures from all learners indicating they have agreed to be filmed.

D. Use of Video Platform When Teaching Virtual Instructor-led training

Do not post online meeting details (such as links or passcodes) in any public forum, as this could lead to uninvited participants joining a virtual Instructor-led training. Online meeting details originate in MHFA Connect.

XXI. Liability and Mental Health First Aid USA Courses

A. Legal Liability for Instructors

At this time, MHFA USA does not require Instructors to carry any liability insurance. Any questions about liability coverage for Instructors should be directed to an Instructor's legal advisor or insurance carrier.

B. Legal Liability for First Aiders

If First Aiders have questions about liability issues surrounding practicing MHFA USA, the following information may be communicated: First Aiders who have completed the program are by no means required to act on their knowledge – but have simply been provided with information on how they may be able to do so. Application of course information does not supersede organization policies regarding mandatory reporting.

Good Samaritan laws cover help provided by First Aiders in the communities. However, the details and extent of these laws vary by state.

Mental Health First Aid – Tenets of Fidelity

Mental Health First Aid USA uses the term “fidelity” to describe the measures needed to ensure core elements of the Mental Health First Aid program are kept intact. Mental Health First Aid USA expects all Instructors and Coordinators to honor these tenets, regardless of delivery method.

MHFA USA expects those who provide the program in the United States and its Territories to honor the principles outlined here.

Content

The MHFA curriculum must be taught in its entirety. Instructors are expected to present all required slides, exercises and program videos in the order they appear in the Teaching Notes. Each First Aider must also receive a manual, either as a physical copy (In-person courses) or electronically through MHFA Connect, the MHFA learning management system (Blended courses). Additional content for local purposes, such as lists of area resources, is allowed but should be limited to helpful resources. Any additional content must be added to the end of the full curriculum presentation. All content is copyrighted, and the PowerPoint slides may not be printed or shared electronically with attendees.

Each curriculum’s Teaching Notes offer a variety of suggestions for discussion topics, exercises and other activities designed to keep learners attentive and actively engaged in the course. The curricula are designed to change the pace of the course frequently, requiring participants to stay involved in the content. Instructors should both focus on keeping the content and discussions moving forward and on creating an environment for active engagement.

Audience

The MHFA USA curriculum is specifically designed for adult learners 18 years of age and older. The course may not be delivered to anyone under the age of 18. It may only be delivered within the United States and its Territories, including American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, on U.S. military bases and in U.S. embassies.

Presentation

MHFA courses must be facilitated by one or two certified Instructors. Non-certified Instructors may not teach the course. Provisionally certified Instructors must teach their MHFA course alongside a certified MHFA Instructor.

For tMHFA, two adults must always participate in the Instructor-led session. One must be a certified tMHFA Instructor. The other adult may be a classroom teacher, mental health professional or another trusted adult familiar with the training who is certified in YMHA.

Schedule

In-person and Blended MHFA courses may be scheduled as described in the Instructor Policy Handbook, Section VII G.

Delivery

MHFA courses may be delivered in the In-person format or a Blended format. Blended courses include self-paced and Instructor-led content. The Instructor-led training may be conducted in person or virtually via videoconference. Blended learners must complete the self-paced components prior to participating in the Instructor-led training.

Certified Instructors must complete the virtual learning designation prior to teaching the course.

Class Size

Adult and Youth MHFA

When Instructor-led training is in person: Mental Health First Aid USA has designed In-person courses and Blended courses with in-person Instructor-led training to be facilitated by one or two certified Instructors. (One of the Instructors may be provisionally certified.) Non-certified Instructors may not teach the course.

Instructors should present to a group size they are comfortable managing and that includes enough participants to foster group discussion. The minimum number of learners in a course is five and the maximum number of learners in a course is 30.

When Instructor-led training is virtual: Mental Health First Aid USA has designed Blended courses with virtual Instructor-led training for facilitation by two certified Instructors to an audience of up to 30 learners. An individual certified Instructor teaching a course by themselves may teach up to 15 participants in a single course. Non-certified Instructors and Instructors who have not earned the Blended courses with virtual Instructor-led training designation may not teach the course.

Instructors should present to a group size they are comfortable managing online and that includes enough participants to foster group discussion. The minimum number of participants in a course is five, and the maximum number of participants in a course is 30. Safety precautions, including those for virtual Instructor-led training with up to 30 learners, are described in “Safety.”

tMHFA

MHFA recommends a minimum of five and a maximum of 30 teens in an in-person tMHFA class and a minimum of five and a maximum of 20 in a virtual class. The class size (physical or virtual) should be typical of class sizes at the tMHFA Site. Assembly-style sessions in an auditorium or large webinars are not permitted.

Safety

Safety is paramount while teaching MHFA, and mental health and substance use are often be viewed as somber, serious or “heavy” topics. The program itself is designed to give appropriate weight to the severity of certain mental health and substance use challenges while emphasizing hope for recovery and presenting the material in a relaxed and comfortable environment.

When teaching in a virtual setting, Instructors are required to maintain a “Virtual Hallway” breakout room for all classes so learners can “step out” of the training. When co-teaching, the second Instructor will monitor the virtual hallway and can periodically private chat participants to see how they are feeling.

Instructing a large group online increases risks related to learner safety and crisis management, including greater difficulty monitoring the engagement and mental wellbeing of all learners. Therefore, MHFA USA requires that one of the following safety precautions is in place for virtual Instructor-led trainings:

- Two Instructors.
- One Instructor and a non-participating mental health clinician or organization staff member to monitor the chat and Virtual Hallway.
- One Instructor and a non-participating certified Mental Health First Aider to monitor the chat and Virtual Hallway.

If an Instructor is planning to teach between 20 and 30 participants, they must have a second Instructor and a Virtual Hallway monitor (a third Instructor, a non-participating mental health clinician or a non-participating certified Mental Health First Aider). The Virtual Hallway monitor does not need to participate in the training but must be “on call” in the event that a learner needs to use the Virtual Hallway. If a learner uses the Virtual Hallway, one of the Instructors must alert the monitor, who can sign into the virtual meeting platform and meet the learner in the Virtual Hallway.

For tMHFA, MHFA USA recommends teaching no more than 20 teens in a virtual class. Prior to implementing the tMHFA course with teens, sites must agree to develop detailed safety protocols and abide by them.

Required Safety Protocols

Adult and Youth MHFA

All Instructors are required to implement the following safety protocols in every course taught:

- Collect emergency contact information for each participant.
- The co-Instructor/virtual course support person will monitor the virtual hallway and periodically private chat with each learner to check how they are feeling.
- Follow up with learners who leave the virtual Instructor-led portion of the class without alerting the Instructor, co-Instructor or virtual course support person.
- Provide the following national crisis resources, and any local mental health resources, to all participants:
 - 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
 - Call or text 988.
 - Military and Veterans press 1.
 - Spanish-speakers press 2.
- Disseminate and collect MHFA Exit Tickets from learners at the end of each virtual Instructor-led training. Learners should be instructed to stay in the session until they have submitted their MHFA Exit Ticket. Instructors should review the MHFA Exit Tickets immediately after the course concludes. Instructors should reach out to any learner who has indicated they want to be checked on by phone or email. Instructors should have a plan to

connect a learner to local emergency mental health services or national crisis resources if the learner indicates they are in significant distress following the course.

tMHFA

It is the responsibility of the tMHFA Site to put the following safety mechanisms in place and abide by them:

1. Responding to teens during the tMHFA courses or program implementation:
 - A teen who shows signs of distress during the course or who is not responding or participating.
 - A teen who causes the tMHFA Instructors alarm or concern about their safety (physical or mental).
 - Teens who ask for assistance for themselves or a friend during the course.
2. Administering and responding to Exit Tickets.
 - Sites must collect Exit Tickets from teens at the end of each Instructor-led session. Teens will not be allowed to leave the Instructor-led session until they have submitted their Exit Ticket.
 - Instructors, in accordance with their site protocol, may choose to administer physical or digital Exit Tickets. They must have a plan to respond in a timely manner to teens who ask for assistance for themselves or a friend during the course.
3. Have a mental health professional available while the tMHFA Instructor-led session is being taught, should a teen need to be contacted and/or requests additional support.
 - This could be a school mental health professional, a community mental health professional or another adult identified by the site who can assist the tMHFA Instructor.
 - Direct contact information for the mental health professional or a site staff person must be readily available to teens and tMHFA instructors. This ensures a teen can reach out for support if they need to speak to an adult during or after the training.
4. Provide information about tMHFA to parents/guardians.
 - This information must include the safety protocols, instructions for opting their child out of the course and a tMHFA site contact to whom parents/guardians can reach out while their child takes the course.
5. Provide information about tMHFA to teens prior to taking the course.
 - This information must include the safety protocols and whom to contact with questions or concerns about taking tMHFA.
6. Maintain current and accurate contact information for a parent/guardian and/or an emergency contact for every teen who is taking the course.
 - Instructors must have the emergency contact information available to them while they are teaching the Instructor-led session in the event they have urgent concerns about a teen's safety.
7. Two adults must always participate in the Instructor-led session.
 - One must be a certified tMHFA Instructor. The other adult may be a classroom teacher, mental health professional or another trusted adult familiar with the training that is certified in YMHFA.

Spirit

Mental health and substance use can often be viewed as somber, serious or “heavy” topics. Mental Health First Aid courses give appropriate weight to the severity of certain mental health and substance use challenges while also emphasizing hope for recovery and presenting the material in a relaxed and comfortable environment. Reducing the stigma associated with mental wellness challenges is a primary goal of the course and should touch every aspect of the course.

PLEASE NOTE – The Manuals provide the following disclaimer:

“The information on this manual is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for medical professional help, advice, diagnosis or treatment. It is not intended to establish a standard of care for the provision of emergency mental health services. Always seek the advice of a qualified health care provider if you have concerns regarding a medical condition or treatment. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you read in this manual. The information, including but not limited to, text, graphics, images and other material contained in this manual are for the purpose of promoting broad consumer understanding and knowledge on mental health care. None of the procedures provided in this manual represents or warrants that any particular procedure is safe, appropriate or effective for you or anyone whom you deem requires assistance of Mental Health First Aid. Reliance on any information appearing in this manual is solely at your own risk. If you are in the United States and experiencing a medical emergency, please call 911 or for emergency medical help on the nearest phone.:

Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – Call or text 988

This is a crisis hotline that can help with many issues, not just suicide. For example, anyone who feels sad, hopeless or suicidal; family and friends who are concerned about a loved one; or anyone interested in mental health treatment referrals can call the Lifeline. Callers are connected with a nearby professional who will talk with them about what they are feeling or their concerns for other family and friends. Call or text 24 hours/day, seven days/week.

Military and veterans press 1. For Spanish, press 2.