

Maryland Mental Health First Aid Presentation at NASMHPD July 13, 2008

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OUR VISION:

Thousands of Marylanders & millions of Americans will be trained to:

- (1) Identify a mental health emergency and emerging mental illness; and
- (2) be effective responders to these situations.



Preventative response to Virginia Tech & Northern Illinois tragedies

Maryland Health Secretary
John Colmers and Mental
Hygiene Director Brian
Hepburn wanted to create a
mental health prevention
program to address issues
faced by these tragedies.



Mental Health First Aid

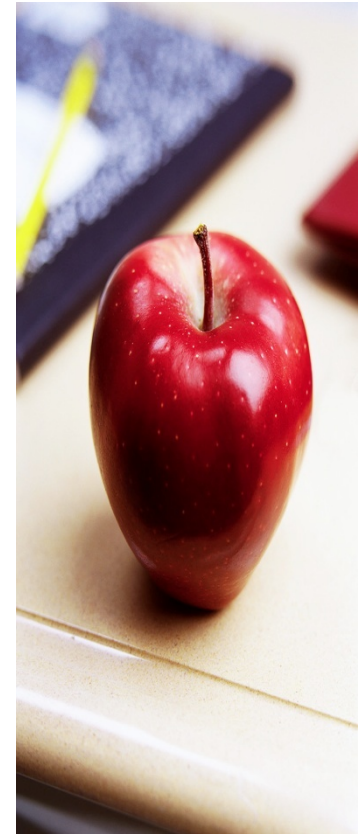
The initial help given to someone developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis before appropriate professional or other help, including peer and family support, can be engaged.

Description of the Program

12-hour course (with flexible scheduling)

Participants learn how to:

- Give first aid in a mental health crisis and/or early stages of a mental health problem;
- Identify early stages of mental health problems;
- Observe signs and symptoms of the most common mental health problems;
- Know where and when to get help; and
- Understand what types of help have been effective.



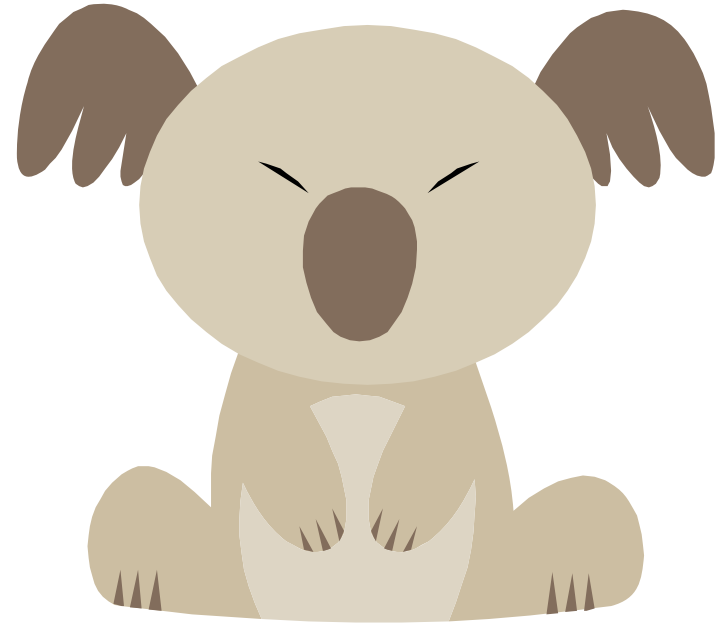
Mental Health Topics Covered:



- Depression
- Anxiety Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar Disorder
- Eating Disorders
- Self-Injury
- Substance Abuse Disorders

HISTORY of MHFA

In 2001, Betty Kitchener, a nurse and a mental health consumer, and Professor Tony Jorm developed the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Program at the Centre for Mental Health Research at the Australian National University.



MHFA Around the Globe

MHFA has been translated to other countries:

- ❖ Scotland
- ❖ Finland
- ❖ Singapore
- ❖ England
- ❖ Canada
- ❖ Hong Kong

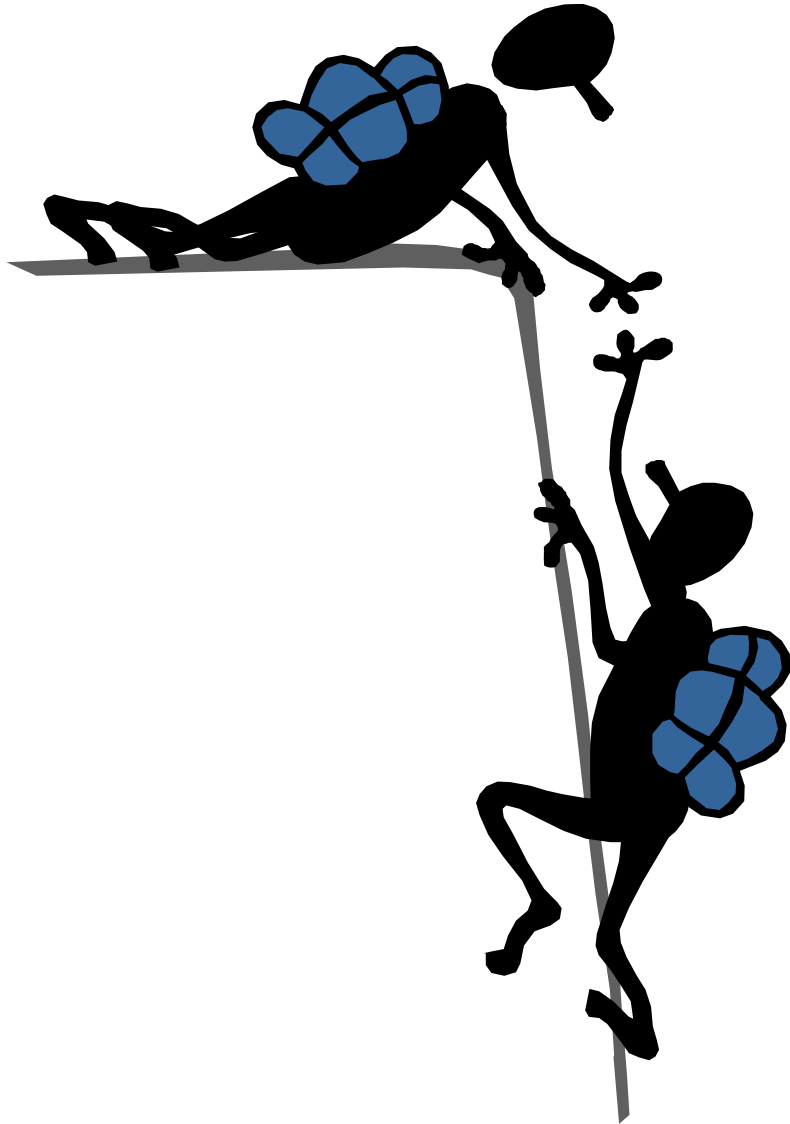


MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CONCEPT



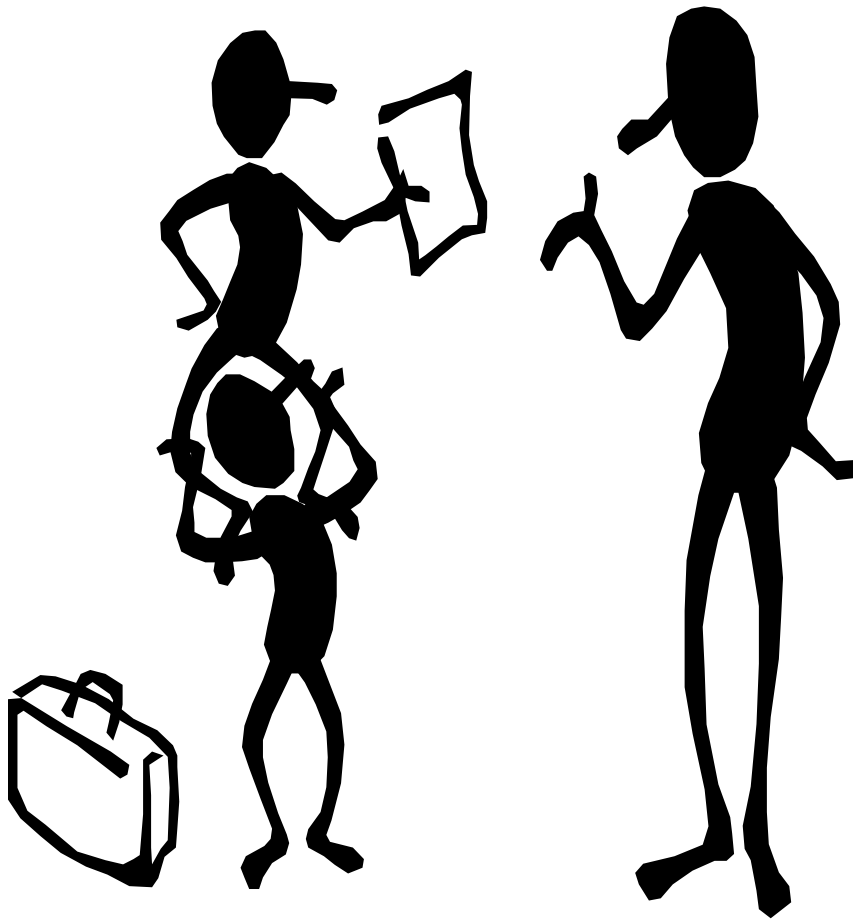
- ▶ **Mental health needs should be responded to and prioritized similar to physical health emergencies**
- ▶ **Members of the public can play a useful initial role**

MHFA ACTION PLAN



1. **Assess Risk of Suicide or Harm**
2. **Listen Non-judgmentally**
3. **Give Reassurance and Information**
4. **Encourage Person to Get Appropriate Professional Help**
5. **Encourage Self-help Strategies**

INTERACTIVE MHFA



MHFA is RESEARCHED-BASED

- **Formal evaluation**
- **Publication in peer-reviewed journals**



MHFA EVALUATION RESULTS



- improved recognition of mental disorders
- changed beliefs about treatment - more like those of health professionals
- decreased social distance from people with mental disorders
- increased confidence in providing help
- an increase in the amount of help provided to others.

Evidence that MHFA is effective:

Four successful evaluation trials have been conducted:

- 1. Public members in an urban setting
BMC Psychiatry 2002, 2:10**
- 2. Public servants
BMC Psychiatry 2004, 4:23**
- 3. Public Members in a rural area
BMC Psychiatry 2004, 4:33**
- 4. Analysis of stories
BMC Psychiatry 2005, 5:43**

Main Findings from Trained Group:

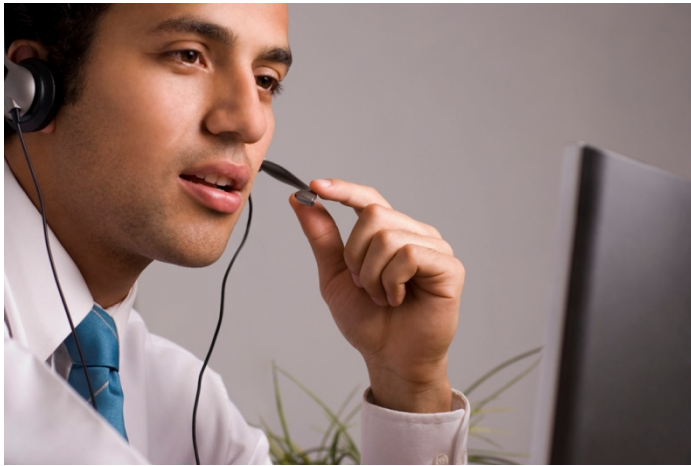
- More confidence in providing help;
- Increased likelihood of advising people to seek professional help
- More accord with health professionals in beliefs about treatments
- Less Social distance (stigmatizing attitudes)
- Bettered participants' own mental health

Example of using MHFA in a workplace

“I recognized clinical depression that was leading to suicide thoughts in one of my work colleagues. I listened, did not prejudge. My work colleague became calm. I was able to give suggestions on what he/we could do, e.g. GP, counselor, mental health team.”

Using MHFA to Aid a Stranger

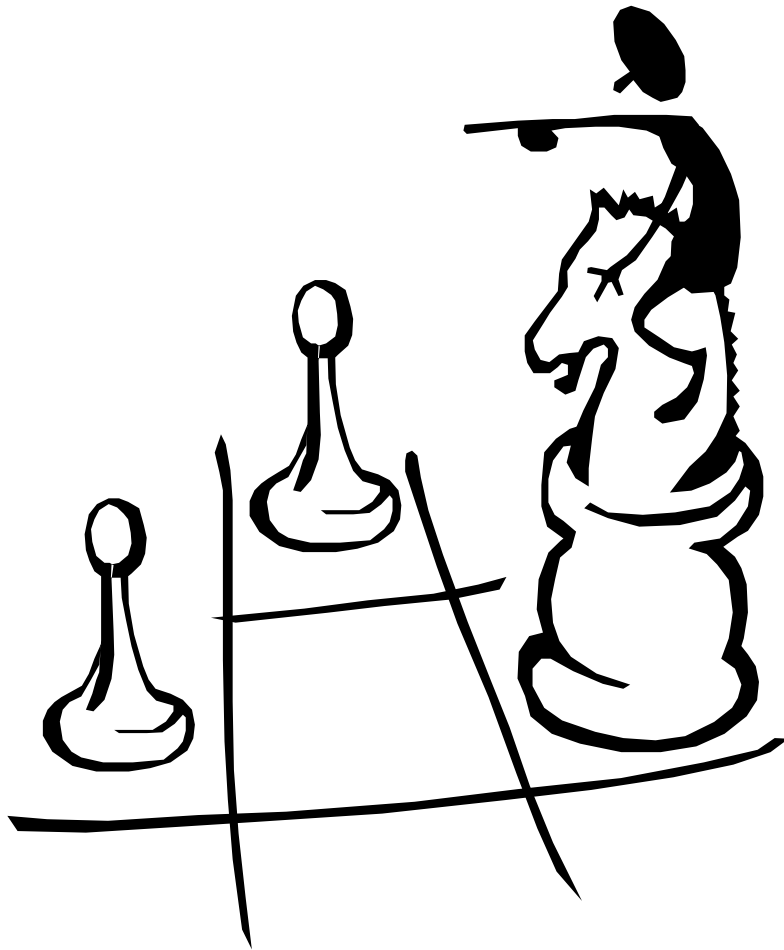
“I was sitting next to a woman suffering an anxiety (panic) attack. I offered to help her with her breathing and she was able to use breathing techniques and control her anxiety. I distracted her young child who was traveling with her. I think it helped her to know that I knew something about panic attacks and that I was comfortable with her situation.”



E-Learning Version of MHFA

- The MHFA Program is now enhancing its CD to be an e-learning version of the 12-hour MHFA course.
- A specialized one-day face-to-face course will need to be undertaken with a MHFA Instructor to complete course requirements to receive certificate.
- This CD version will be particularly useful for shift workers and rural and remote locations.

MHFA: Implementation Plan



Still evolving ...

- **Advisory Committee**
- **Target areas/populations**
- **Americanize Manuals**
- **Establish standards**
- **Develop business plan**
- **Train the Trainers**

Applicant Qualifications

- Selection process for Instructors
- Must meet specific criteria
- Complete 5-day training course
- Certified as an Instructor after taking course, passing a role play, and sending in evaluations.



Please stay in touch!

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