

*This training package aims to build upon existing mental health literacy programs within high school communities*

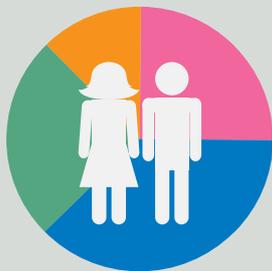
Youth and teen Mental Health First Aid courses, implemented together, can improve the capacity of the whole school to respond early and effectively when a young person is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Our Youth Mental Health First Aid course is designed for adults who interact with adolescents and can equip responsible adults to recognise and respond to mental health problems, refer a young person to professional help if needed and provide ongoing support without taking on the role of a counsellor.

teen Mental Health First Aid is a shorter and less intense course designed to help young people recognise when their friends are in need of help. The focus is on getting a responsible and trusted adult involved as quickly as possible.

## Results from a 2013 pilot evaluation study of teen MHFA

- Inner-city Public
- Inner-city Independent
- Rural Public
- Rural Catholic



1000 year 10 and 11 students were trained across four schools in Greater Melbourne. 87% of students completed surveys before, after, and three months after the training.



Positive changes to student attitudes towards people with a mental health problem.

Students...

were **less likely** to believe that mental health problems increase dangerousness



were **less likely** to believe that mental health problems are a sign of personal weakness

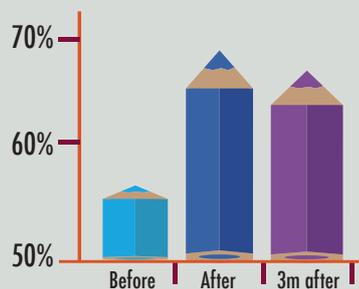


showed **less desire** for social distance\*



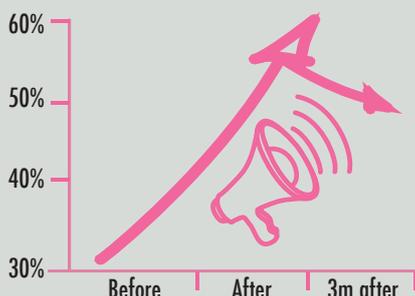
Recognition of an anxiety disorder in a vignette significantly increased after the course. This effect was still seen after three months.

Recognition of depression was already quite high: 86% of students correctly identified depression in a vignette before the course.



Students' confidence in helping a peer with a mental health problem significantly increased after the course. This effect was also maintained after three months.

Students also reported they were more willing to disclose their own mental health problem to others (47% before vs 61% after).



# Responding to developing mental health problems is an important issue in schools

Mental illnesses often start in adolescence or early adulthood and it is important to **detect problems early** to ensure the young person is properly treated and supported.

Within the 14-hour Youth MHFA Course, responsible adults will learn about adolescent development and the signs and symptoms of mental health problems, where and how to get help and what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective. This course is evidence-based and covers common mental health problems affecting young people and associated crises including thoughts of suicide and non-suicidal self-injury. Delivery format is flexible and course participants receive a copy of the Youth MHFA manual to keep and are eligible to become an accredited Mental Health First Aider.

You can find your local MHFA Instructor by visiting our website and contacting them directly to arrange a course for your school community.

*School staff need to be trained in Youth MHFA in order for teen MHFA courses to be conducted for years 7-9 and 10-12 students in your high school.*



In recognition that young people have a preference for sharing problems with peers, the teen MHFA Course teaches high school students how to provide mental health first aid to their friends.

The teen MHFA course curriculum was developed using an expert consensus method. Experts in youth mental health and mental health education, as well as young people who had experienced mental illness in high school, contributed their expertise. This course focuses on the pattern of thoughts, feelings and behaviours that show there might be a problem rather than focusing on specific illnesses.



This course does not teach or encourage students to offer each other counselling of any kind, or to try to handle these problems alone. Diagnosis and treatment are the responsibility of properly trained mental health professionals. Rather, students are taught to seek help of a trusted adult who can get their friend this kind of help as soon as possible.



Students learn how to:

- Recognise the signs of a developing mental health problem
- Recognise the signs of a mental health crisis, particularly suicide
- Get a responsible and trusted adult to take over as necessary

This course is delivered across 3 interactive classroom sessions of 75 minutes each. The course has specifically been designed to engage this age group. Course participants receive a copy of the teen MHFA Manual and a Certificate of Completion.

## Become an Instructor to deliver these courses in your school community

The Youth MHFA Instructor Training Course is conducted by two trainers over 5.5 days and accredits successful applicants to conduct the 14-hour YMHFA Course.

For more information please visit...



[www.mhfa.com.au](http://www.mhfa.com.au)