

# Mental Health

## Best Management Practices & Policies

Mental Health First Aid  
Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

# NWT HEALTHY COMMUNITIES Toolkit



# Mental Health First Aid

IN THE WORKPLACE



## In the Workplace:

In a recent major Canadian study, 82% of responding organizations ranked mental health conditions in their top three causes of short term disability (72% for long-term).

30% of all short and long term disability claims are due to mental health problems and illnesses.



## Workplace First Aid Includes Mental Health

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Just as physical first aid is administered to an injured person before medical treatment can be obtained, MHFA is provided until appropriate support is found or until the crisis is resolved.

Colleagues and managers are best placed to be the first to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues in their co-workers, the public or visitors to the community government facility, provided they are properly trained in Mental Health First Aid.





## Mental Health First Aid Northern Peoples

The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Canada for Northern Peoples course is guided by a number of important principles such as respect, cooperation, resilience, community, harmony, generosity and resourcefulness. Many of these values are used to guide Aboriginal ways of living. All of these values are considered important and many are interconnected with one another.

This course was designed to respect the importance of balance. That means that the whole person - mental, physical, social, emotional and spiritual parts of a person - must be considered when providing mental health first aid. It also means that for someone to be healthy, all of those parts must be in balance

### **Mental Health First Aid Northern Peoples is an 18-hour course that discusses the following mental disorders:**

- Substance related disorders
- Mood related disorders
- Anxiety and trauma related disorders
- Psychotic disorders
- Deliberate self-injury

### **Crisis first aid skills for the following situations are learned:**

- Substance overdose
- Suicidal behaviour
- Panic attack
- Acute stress reaction
- Psychotic episode

### **Mental Health First Aid trained employees will help equip your organization to:**

- **Recognize** and **understand** the **symptoms** of mental health problems, including those related to substance abuse
- **Provide help** to prevent the mental health problem from developing into a more serious state
- **Promote the recovery** of good mental health by accommodating employees in distress or recovering from a crisis
- **Increase productivity** and reduce absenteeism and overall pressure on benefits

### **Evidence has shown that individuals who complete the 12-hour basic course have:**

- Significantly **greater recognition** of the most common mental health illnesses and problems
- **Decreased social distance** from people with mental health illnesses or problems
- **Increased confidence** in providing help to others
- **Demonstrated increase** in helpful actions

### **Are these not skills you would hope to foster in your employees?**





## Mental Health First Aid Improves All Aspects of the Organization

Employers who set a strategic direction for improving mental health are rewarded with **dramatic cost and effectiveness benefits**, enjoying significant and sustainable enhancements in:

- **Productivity:** happy and psychologically healthy employees work harder and more efficiently
- **Recruitment and Retention:** today's top-quality employees expect a workplace that supports their personal and professional growth
- **Cost Savings due to Disability and Absenteeism:** there is a strong link between mental health, physical well-being and injury prevention
- **Conflict Reduction:** better mental health among employees means fewer grievances and complaints and a stronger corporate reputation
- **Operational Success:** mentally healthy workplaces are characterized by higher levels of employee motivation, commitment, innovation and creativity, as well as fewer errors, better decision making and improved planning
- **Customer Service:** Having trained employees with the ability to provide the best customer service and diffuse situations that may occur with the public. (i.e.: important for front line staff dealing with visitors or the public on daily basis).



For more information on **Mental Health First Aid** and the next program offered in your community : **MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CANADA** [HTTP://WWW.MENTALHEALTHFIRSTAID.CA/EN/PAGES/DEFAULT.ASPX](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca/en/pages/default.aspx)

Section/Number: Mental Health – 01	Approval Date: (DD/MM/YY)
Subject: Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy	Amendment Dates:
<p>Policy</p> <p>The <u>Community Government Name</u> believes that the mental health and wellbeing of our staff is key to success and sustainability.</p> <p>It is essential for the <u>Community Government Name</u> to establish, promote and maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff through workplace practices, and encourages staff to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Therefore, the <u>Community Government Name</u> will provide support through employee programs, accommodations and return to work actions plans for employees that require a leave from regular work duties.</p>	
Definitions	

### Guidelines

1. To build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that supports mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination (include bullying and harassment).
2. To increase employee knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours.
3. Provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing. (i.e.: through physical activity, stress buster activities, and social events.)
4. To reduce stigma around depression and anxiety in the workplace.
5. This policy applies to all employees, including contractors and casual staff.
6. All employees have a responsibility to:
  - Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health.
  - Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace.
7. Managers have a responsibility to:
  - Ensure that all workers are made aware of this policy.
  - Actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy, including its goals.
  - Manage the implementation of Employee Assistance Programs and training of Mental Health First Aid in the workplace.
  - Provide any known accommodations in the workplace for the employee.
  - Follow and create a realistic return to work action plan.
  - Continuous support for employee that discloses mental health disability.
8. Manage conflict effectively and ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment, discrimination and racism.
9. Establish good two-way communication to ensure staff involvement.

### Attachments

Mental Health First Aid SMP

Employee Wellness – Free Access to Recreation Facilities SMP

Physical Activity and the Benefits of Doing it Regular SMP

References: