

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)