

Mental Health First Aid

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Identify, Understand, Respond

Mental Health First Aid helps you assist someone experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis. In the Mental Health First Aid course, you learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help.

Mental Health Is A Huge Topic

- Depression and mood disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Trauma
- Psychosis
- Substance Use disorders

A focus on *recovery* and *resiliency* – the belief that individuals experiencing these challenges can and do get better and use their strengths to stay well.

You are not expected to be a mental health professional but can respond in a way that helps people get the support that they need.



Impacts

Substance abuse, mental health disorders, and mental illness all affect a person's ability to function in their:

- Thinking
- Emotional state
- Behavior

This usually negatively impacts normal daily functioning.



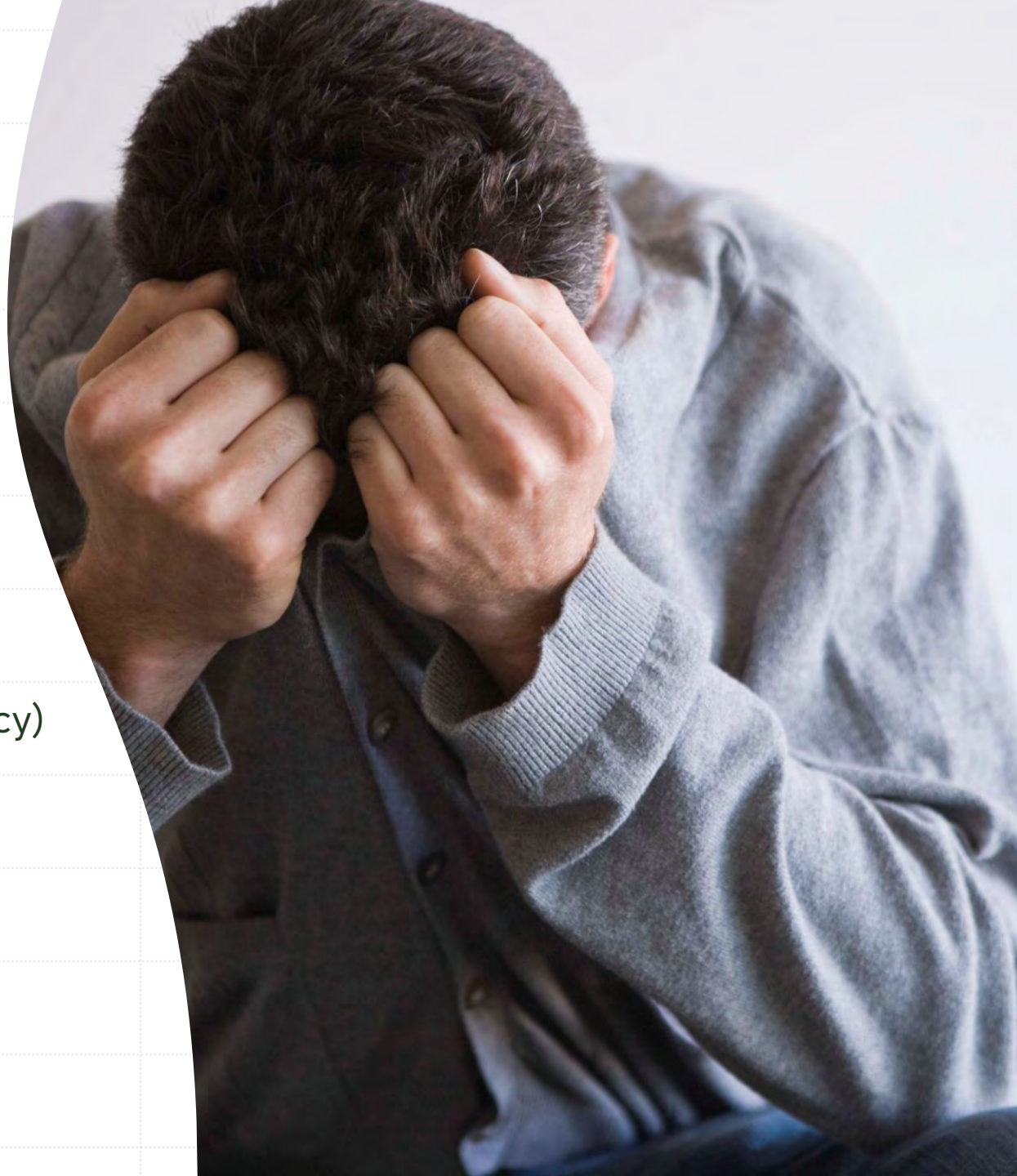
Signs- What You Might See



- Withdrawal from others
- Irritability
- Changes in self-care/appearance
- Personality change
- Tearfulness
- Confusion/indecisiveness
- Intoxication
- Dramatic changes in mood
- Self-criticism
- Responding to internal stimuli

Symptoms- What Someone Might Feel

- Sadness/anxiety/fear
- Low energy
- Sleep disturbance
- Appetite change
- Headaches
- Need for more substance use over time (dependency)
- Physical withdrawal
- Unexplained aches and pains
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Thoughts of death and suicide






Setting Boundaries For YOURSELF



Guidance From The Process Therapy Institute

Boundaries are for you, the self-care of you, and the safety for both you and those you engage with. Boundaries are non-negotiable and must be enforceable without cooperation from others. Boundaries are set by you, for you, before ever meeting anyone.

Boundaries I agree to set for me:

- 
- To not abuse you.
 - To own my truth and not intrude it on you.
 - To clean up my messes by taking responsibility for my actions.
 - To maintain boundaries of safety and support.
 - To maintain my neutrality and integrity. Not abandon myself for you.
 - To hold unconditional regard for you.
 - To honor your reaction to my invitations.

Mental Health First Aid Action Plan

- Assess for safety, risk of suicide or possible harm
- Listen nonjudgmentally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage appropriate professional help
- Encourage self-help and other support strategies



Assess For Safety FIRST

Assess a situation first and if you feel unsafe, do not initiate contact.

You can check in with your own gut feelings and intuition about this. If you have an icky feeling in your body, contact emergency staff to support. They have specialized skills to intervene.



Assessing For Risk Of Suicide Or Harm

When helping a person going through a mental health crisis, it is important to look for signs of suicidal thoughts and behaviors, non-suicidal self-injury, or other harm. Some warning signs of suicide include:

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
- Seeking access to means to hurt or kill oneself
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- Feeling hopeless
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawing from family, friends, or society
- Appearing agitated or angry
- Having a dramatic change in mood



Asking About Imminent Threat

If you feel a person may be suicidal, it is totally OK to ask about it outright.

“I’m wondering if you’re thinking about hurting/killing yourself.”

What is imminent threat or danger to self or others? When the person has:

- A desire to kill themselves
- A plan
- Means
- Access to means

1-800-704-0900 (Adult Mobile Crisis)

▶ Or call 911 for immediate help

https://missioncollege.edu/student_services/parking-police/documents/red-folder.pdf

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If You Feel Safe To Connect and No Imminent Threat

It may seem simple, but the ability to listen (listen nonjudgmentally) and have a meaningful conversation requires skill and patience. Listening is critical in helping an individual feel respected, accepted, and understood.

You can use a set of verbal and nonverbal skills such as open body posture, comfortable eye contact, and other strategies to engage in appropriate conversation.





What types of responses were unhelpful when you were going through a challenging time?

Gentle Ways Of Communicating

Your body language says a lot.

You can verbalize your concern in a gentle way through:

- Notice
- Name
- Guess
- Wonder
- SHARE



Give Reassurance And Resources

It is important to recognize that mental illnesses and addictions are real, treatable illnesses from which people can and do recover. When talking to someone you believe may be experiencing symptoms of a mental illness, approach the conversation with respect and dignity and don't blame the individual for his or her symptoms.

Mission provides information and resources you can offer to someone to provide emotional support and practical help.





The Most Common Resources

- Crisis Mental Health Services number **988**
- Adult Mobile Crisis **1-800-704-0900**
- Santa Clara Call Center for referral to mental health support **1-800-704-0900**
- Here4You Centralized Shelter Hotline **1-408-385-2400**
- Domestic Violence 24-Hour Hotline (Next Door Solutions) **1-408- 279-2962**
- YWCA Rape Crisis Center Hotline **1-408- 287-3000**



Encourage Appropriate Professional Help

There are many professionals who can offer help when someone is in crisis or may be experiencing the signs and symptoms of a mental illness or addiction.

- Types of Professionals
 - Doctors (primary care physicians or psychiatrists)
 - Social workers, counselors, and other mental health professionals
 - Certified peer specialists
- Types of Professional Help
 - “Talk” therapies
 - Medication
 - Other professional supports

Encourage Self-Help and Self-Care Strategies

Individuals with mental illness can contribute to their own recovery and wellness through:

- Exercise
- Relaxation and meditation
- Participating in peer support groups
- Self-help books based on cognitive behavioral therapy
- Engaging with family, friends, faith, and other social networks



Providing Support



The “First Aid” is provided until the person receives appropriate support, resources, or treatment. In case of a crisis, “First Aid” is provided until the crisis resolves, usually through intervention by professionals.

You do not diagnose.

You do not provide counseling or therapy.



What you do is good enough!