



## Information for Individuals – Becoming a Mental Health First Aid Instructor

### What is mental health first aid?

Mental health first aid is the help offered to a person developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. The first aid is provided until appropriate professional treatment is received or until the crisis resolves.

Training in mental health first aid provides:

- skills in how to recognise the signs and symptoms of mental health problems
- knowledge of the possible risk factors for these mental health problems
- awareness of the evidenced based medical, psychological and alternative treatments available
- skills in how to give appropriate initial help and support someone experiencing a mental health problem and
- skills in how to take appropriate action if a crisis situation arises.

### Where did Mental Health First Aid come from?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Australia is a national non-profit health promotion charity, first developed in Australia by Betty Kitchener AM, a nurse and educator who herself has experienced severe depression and Professor Tony Jorm, an international renowned researcher in mental health literacy. Since 2000, MHFA Australia's core work has been to research and develop evidence-based teaching materials and train suitably experienced Instructors to deliver MHFA courses within their own workplaces and communities.

MHFA courses include:

- Standard\* - 12-hour course for adults helping other adults (suitable for delivery within communities and workplaces)
- Youth\* - 14-hour course for adults helping adolescents (suitable for teachers, parents, coaches etc.)
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander\* - 14-hour course for adults helping an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Person
- teen - 3 classroom based sessions for adolescents for helping their peers (suitable for delivery in schools and groups)
- Older Person\* - 12-hour course for adults helping an Older Person (suitable for aged care workers and family members)
- Chinese\* - 12-hour course Standard MHFA Course delivered in traditional or simplified Chinese
- Vietnamese\* - 12-hour course Standard MHFA Course delivered in Vietnamese
- eLearning and Blended courses for specific professions

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

**A not-for-profit organisation focused on mental health training and research**

Level 6, 369 Royal Parade Parkville VIC 3052 Australia  
e: [mhfa@mhfa.com.au](mailto:mhfa@mhfa.com.au) t: +61 3 9079 0200 f: +61 3 9347 3248

Mental Health First Aid Australia is a trading name of Mental Health First Aid International ABN: 57 153 480 436



- MHFA for the Suicidal Person - half-day specialised standalone training on how to offer mental health first aid to someone experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviours.
  - \* Participants who complete any of these courses are eligible to become [Accredited MHFAiders](#).

MHFA Australia provides ongoing support to Instructors by providing them with high quality and well evaluated course materials, supportive feedback on their conducted courses, professional development opportunities, updates on relevant mental health statistics and research, a regular newsletter and advertising opportunities via the MHFA website [www.mhfa.com.au](http://www.mhfa.com.au).

## Who can become a Mental Health First Aid Instructor?

Intensive week-long training courses are available to train suitable people to become instructors of the Standard, Youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, teen and Older Person MHFA Courses.

In general, there are eight essential selection criteria that need to be met (there may be some specific criteria for entry into some courses like teen MHFA):

1. Good knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatment
2. Personal or professional experience with people with mental illnesses
3. Favourable attitudes towards people with mental illness
4. Enthusiasm to deliver MHFA courses
5. Good teaching and communication skills
6. Good background knowledge of mental health services
7. Good interpersonal skills
8. Good business plan or organisational support to conduct MHFA courses

A Certificate IV in Workplace Assessment and Training is not necessary to become a MHFA Instructor.

## How can I become an accredited MHFA Instructor?

There are six steps to becoming an accredited MHFA Instructor:

1. Select the course you wish to attend by viewing our Instructor Training calendar online at <https://mhfa.com.au/courses/instructor>. Courses are run throughout the year in most capital cities in Australia.
2. You must complete an application by selecting 'Apply' on the relevant course page. Applications must be received via email, post or fax no later than **4 weeks before the course date**. If your organisation is supporting your application, they will also be required to complete a letter of support. If not, you will be required to complete a brief Business Plan.
3. If your application is approved, we will send you a registration and payment form. This must be completed and returned to us by to confirm your place no

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

**A not-for-profit organisation focused on mental health training and research**

Level 6, 369 Royal Parade Parkville VIC 3052 Australia  
e: [mhfa@mhfa.com.au](mailto:mhfa@mhfa.com.au) t: +61 3 9079 0200 f: +61 3 9347 3248

Mental Health First Aid Australia is a trading name of Mental Health First Aid International ABN: 57 153 480 436



later than 2 weeks prior to the course commencing. *See the end of this document for course fees and cancellation policy*

4. Before the course commences, successful applicants must also sign and return an Agreement Form of the copyright materials, standardisation of the MHFA Program and accreditation.
5. Once you commence the training course, you will be re-assessed as suitable by two trainers or instructors at the end of Day 3. This assessment is based on observation of your communication skills, knowledge and attitudes.
6. You will also need to undertake an open book exam and give a successful presentation on a section of the MHFA course on Day 4 or 5

*Please note: We are not able to hold a place in an Instructor Training Course for a potential applicant before receiving their application. If your organisation is interested in training a group of Instructors, we may be able to hold an Instructor Training course at a date and location of your request. Contact us for more information at [mhfa@mhfa.com.au](mailto:mhfa@mhfa.com.au).*

### **What are the benefits to becoming an Instructor?**

MHFA training can be delivered to a variety of audiences, including to staff as part of orientation and ongoing staff training. MHFA training can provide staff with skills and knowledge to assist their fellow colleagues and/or clients when they are experiencing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. If you provide services to a particular community or target group, MHFA training can be promoted as another service you offer which will assist them in becoming empowered to support each other and seek appropriate assistance from local services.

MHFA Instructors are not employed by MHFA Australia. Rather they have the autonomy to organise and conducting their own MHFA courses. Instructors are also able to set their own fees. They do need to purchase a MHFA manual from MHFA Australia for every participant in each MHFA course they conduct. Although there are upfront costs to train Instructors, many Instructors find that they are able to see a return on investment after 2-3 courses.

You will be able to take comfort in being involved with an innovative program that is well regarded by the community that has received recognition nationally and overseas. MHFA has solid evidence for its effectiveness from randomized controlled trials and qualitative studies. Evaluations have consistently shown that MHFA training is associated with improved knowledge of mental illnesses and their treatments, knowledge of appropriate first aid strategies, and confidence in providing first aid to individuals with mental illness. To our knowledge, MHFA is the only mental health education course for the public that has National Health and Medical Research Centre Level 1 evidence for an intervention.



Due to this strong commitment to research and evaluation, MHFA has rapidly spread overseas, and has been adopted by more than 20 countries including Canada, USA and across the UK. Since 2000, more than 500,000 Australian adults have now been trained in MHFA through a pool of over 1,300 Instructors and more than 2 million people have been trained worldwide. MHFA training is available in every state and territory of Australia.

## **What are the upfront costs to attend a MHFA Instructor Training Course?**

- \$3,620 per person for 5-day Standard and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander MHFA Instructor Training courses
- \$3,400 per person for 5-day Older Person MHFA Instructor Training courses
- \$4,020 per person for 5.5-day Youth MHFA Instructor Training courses
- \$2,155 per person for 4-day teen MHFA Instructor Training courses

This fee covers tuition, catering, the MHFA Instructor's Kit and annual membership for the first year of accreditation. The kit contains the MHFA teaching materials such as USB with PowerPoint slides and film clips and a teaching resources folder. Informative pamphlets, books and fact sheets can also be included in some kits.

*Should you not be successful in becoming an accredited MHFA Instructor, there will be a fee of \$800 for your attendance, teaching and catering for the course. You will not be able to keep the MHFA Instructor Kit.*

## **What are the ongoing costs?**

Ongoing costs fall into four areas:

### *1) Course Materials*

For each course conducted, Instructors are required to purchase a course manual (usually \$16 for 12-14 hour courses) per participant, which are provided by MHFA Australia at a discounted rate.

### *2) Course Delivery*

Instructors may need to pay for advertising, venue and catering expenses. You may also have travel and accommodation costs if you choose or are invited to travel distances to deliver training.

### *3) Accreditation*

Instructors are expected to complete ongoing professional development in order to retain their accreditation. The current requirements are accumulating 2 CPD points every 12 months by completing webcasts or attending state-based 1-day workshops. A variety of free and low cost professional development opportunities are offered to Instructors.



#### 4) Membership

An annual membership fee of \$100 will be due 1 month from the anniversary date of accreditation. See our Training Policy on page 7 for more information.

If accreditation is lost, Instructors may be able to enrol in the first 3 days of the relevant MHFA Instructor Training Course to re-accredit.

#### 5) Insurance

Anyone delivering training of any type needs to be covered by two types of insurance:

1. Public indemnity insurance - to cover any claims against you.
2. Public liability insurance - to cover any accidents at the training venue.

If you are employed by an organisation, your employer should have taken out **public indemnity** and **public liability** insurance to cover their core business. All employees will be covered. Check with your employer. If your employer's insurance policy does not have either of these types, then they need to talk to their broker to arrange coverage before running any MHFA training courses.

If you are using a training venue that is not at your workplace, then that venue owner should have and is responsible for **public liability insurance**.

If you are self-employed, you will need **public indemnity insurance**. Below are some suggestions of insurance companies you could contact to receive a quote:

- AON Australia: [www.aon.com.au](http://www.aon.com.au)
- QBE: [www.qbe.com.au](http://www.qbe.com.au)
- CGU: [www.cgu.com.au](http://www.cgu.com.au)

Some Instructors also recommend you go through an Insurance broker, such as:

- Mojomo Insurance Brokers: [www.mojomo.com.au](http://www.mojomo.com.au)
- Direct Insurance Brokers: [www.directinsurance.com.au](http://www.directinsurance.com.au)
- OAMPS Insurance Brokers: [www.oamps.com.au](http://www.oamps.com.au)

#### What support do I need if I am running training through my own business?

The first important thing to think about if running training as a small business is your target market. Though MHFA courses are for the general public, it can help if you choose a particular audience. Think about your strengths and experiences. Do you have a background in nursing? Consider marketing to health professionals. Were you once a youth worker? Perhaps promote your courses to youth services you are familiar with. The more you consider your target audience, the easier you will find it to market the course and find participants as word spreads.

The second thing to consider is to make sure you can cover costs through participant fees. MHFA Australia do not have a strict recommendation on pricing as this will vary according to your venue, catering and promotion costs, as well as if you are using MHFA as a major source of income. Plan carefully.

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

**A not-for-profit organisation focused on mental health training and research**

Level 6, 369 Royal Parade Parkville VIC 3052 Australia  
e: [mhfa@mhfa.com.au](mailto:mhfa@mhfa.com.au) t: +61 3 9079 0200 f: +61 3 9347 3248

Mental Health First Aid Australia is a trading name of Mental Health First Aid International ABN: 57 153 480 436



The third point to consider is to ensure if you have adequate time. Delivering MHFA Training is more than just putting aside a weekend here or there to run a 12 or 14-hour course. Time will be needed to promote the course to your target group, take enquiries from participants, liaise with the venue, organise catering, order materials and enter in course data afterwards, as well as preparing yourself by studying and reviewing course materials.

### **What support should I expect from my organisation if they are paying for me to train as an Instructor?**

If you are being supported by your workplace to deliver MHFA training, this can be very beneficial. However, first and foremost as an individual, you need to be committed to delivering training. If you don't feel confident in running MHFA training, let your workplace know rather than go through the process of Instructor training and doubting whether this is a responsibility you wish to take on in your role. Remember that you will be required to deliver at least 6 courses every 2 years to remain accredited (3 courses in your first 12 months).

If you are committed and enthusiastic about delivering MHFA training there is a variety of support your workplace will be able to provide. Depending on the resources available, they may be able to assist with identifying your target groups, promoting the course through contact lists, newsletter, websites etc., receiving enquiries and registering participants, arranging a venue and catering, and ordering course materials from MHFA Australia. You may also have opportunities to co-facilitate with colleagues who are MHFA Instructors or with MHFA Instructors from other organisations your workplace has relationships with.

### **Further questions?**

Visit our website [www.mhfa.com.au](http://www.mhfa.com.au) or contact us via email at [mhfa@mhfa.com.au](mailto:mhfa@mhfa.com.au).



## MHFA Instructor Training Policy

### 1. Course prices

Course prices do not cover travel and accommodation.

#### **Standard MHFA**

Each Standard MHFA Instructor Training Course is conducted over 5 consecutive days from 9 am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. The cost is \$3,620.

#### **Youth MHFA**

Each Youth MHFA Instructor Training Course is conducted over 5.5 days, Sunday (1pm - 5pm) & Monday – Friday (9am - 5pm). The cost is \$4,020.

#### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA**

Each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander MHFA Instructor Training Course is conducted over 5 consecutive days from 9.00 am – 5pm Monday to Friday. The cost is \$4,020.

#### **Teen MHFA**

Each teen MHFA Instructor Training Course is conducted over 4 consecutive days from 9.00 am – 5pm. The cost is \$2,155.

#### **Older Person MHFA**

Each Standard MHFA Instructor Training Course is conducted over 5 consecutive days from 9 am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. The cost is \$3,400.

Instructor Training fees cover tuition, catering, the MHFA Instructor Kit, and annual membership for your first year of accreditation.

### 2. Unsuccessful trainees

Should you be unsuccessful in becoming an accredited MHFA Instructor, there will be a fee of \$800 for your attendance and catering at the course. You will not be able to keep the MHFA Instructor Kit.

### 3. Annual Membership Fee

Please note that an annual membership fee of \$100 is due within 1 month after each anniversary year of your accreditation. This fee is included in the course price for the first year of accreditation. This fee covers ongoing administrative support provided by the MHFA Australia team, access to the Web Instructor Management System, marketing opportunities, discounted course materials, professional development events etc.

### 4. Cancellation Policy

#### a) Cancellations

Fees, minus a cancellation fee are able to be refunded if an accepted applicant is able to notify MHFA Australia of their cancellation to attend. The cancellation fees are as follows:

- i. Less than 4 weeks notice - \$250
- ii. Less than 2 weeks notice - 25% of course fee
- iii. Less than 1 week notice - no refund plus cost of freight to return Instructor Kit

#### b) Transfers



Accepted applicants who request a transfer to a future course date will be charged a fee as per the cancellation policy above.

c) Requests for a cancellation or transfer must be confirmed in writing to Mental Health First Aid Australia

d) In the event of serious illness or hardship a reduced cancellation fee will be charged to recover immediate costs incurred. Supporting evidence must be provided and this decision will be made at the discretion of the CEO.

## **5. Payment**

Full payment of course fees is required no less than 2 weeks prior to course commencement, after you have been accepted into the course.

## **6. Course cancellation**

Course registrations close 4 weeks prior to the course date. If the course is cancelled by MHFA Australia due to insufficient enrolments, a full refund of course fees will be provided to applicants, excluding travel and accommodation costs.

## **7. Re-attendance**

If re-attendance at another course is necessary to complete your training then the following will be payable:

- a) Cost of freight to return Instructor Kit from the original course to MHFA Australia and from MHFA Australia to the new course
- b) The day delegate fee charge by the venue.