



Address Problems Before They Become a Crisis Mental Health First Aid Classes



MUCH LIKE CPR TRAINING, MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID PROVIDES MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES WITH THE TOOLS TO ASSIST OTHERS UNTIL THEY GET PROFESSIONAL HELP.

Mental illness affects almost everyone either directly or indirectly, regardless of age, gender, race or socioeconomic status. One in four adults are affected by mental illness each year.



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But the effects are not just personal. Mental illness, which includes substance use disorders, costs employers approximately \$80 to \$100 billion in indirect costs. People with substance use disorders have overall healthcare costs more than twice as high per year as those without these disorders. In addition, people with both mental illness and substance use disorders have costs that are even higher.

To help raise awareness and address the community's mental health needs, Atrium

Health teaches Mental Health First Aid. It's one of many free services that Atrium Health provides to employers in the Charlotte metropolitan area. Since launching the program in 2014, Atrium Health has trained more than 14,100 participants in Mental Health First Aid.

“The training is very popular. We're finding that employers face this problem often, especially with the opioid crisis and high suicide rate seen nationally,” says Kyla Barnes, health promotions team coordinator at Atrium Health. “People are experiencing these conditions more and more.”

“I'm so glad I had the tools to provide help – and hope – to my friend when she felt there was none.”

– Mental Health First Aid participant

What Is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid, a worldwide certified program run in the United States by the National Council for Behavioral Health (NCBH), gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health condition or experiencing a crisis. The evidence behind the program demonstrates it helps build mental health literacy, so that people can identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness, according to NCBH.

An important part of Mental Health First Aid training is the opportunity to practice an intervention strategy. A trial of 301 randomized participants found that those who took the class have greater confidence in helping others, greater likelihood of advising others to seek mental health help and decreased stigmatizing attitudes.

Just as CPR training helps a person with no clinical training assist someone following a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps a person assist someone experiencing a mental health crisis, such as contemplating suicide.

— National Council for Behavioral Health

A Free Service to Companies and the Public

Any company in the Atrium Health service area, from small startups to large businesses, can sign up for a free Mental Health First Aid class, Barnes says. Although participants usually pay a fee for the training and course materials, Atrium Health is able to offer everything at no cost because it

Sample Agenda for a Mental Health First Aid Class

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SESSION 1

- What is Mental Health First Aid?
- Mental Health Conditions in the United States
- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan
- Understanding Depression and Anxiety
- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan for Depression and Anxiety
 - » Suicidal Behavior
 - » Depression Symptoms
 - » Nonsuicidal Self-Injury

SESSION 2

- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan for Depression and Anxiety (cont.)
 - » Panic Attacks
 - » Traumatic Events
 - » Anxiety Symptoms
- Understanding Psychosis
- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan
 - » Acute Psychosis
 - » Disruptive or Aggressive Behavior
- Understanding Substance Use Disorders
- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan
 - » Overdose
 - » Withdrawal
 - » Substance Use Disorders
- Using Your Mental Health First Aid Training

provides its own in-house certified instructors.

It's part of Atrium Health's mission to help employers improve employee health. "We are always looking at areas where employers can improve the overall health of their workforce," Barnes explains. "Studies show that more Americans than ever are suffering from anxiety and depression. We also see this in pharmaceutical claims data. This reinforces the need for programs such as Mental Health First Aid."

To sign up, companies can contact Barnes and schedule a date. Barnes and her team take care of the rest. The eight-hour course, which can be split into four-hour classes on two consecutive days, must have at least 15 participants. Classes with 30 or more participants will be run by two instructors. Participants can earn continuing education credits for taking the course. The public can also register for Mental Health First Aid training at [AtriumHealth.org/MentalHealth](https://www.AtriumHealth.org/MentalHealth). Participants can also earn continuing education credits for taking the course.



Schedule a free Mental Health First Aid training session today.

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Learn more at [AtriumHealth.org](https://www.AtriumHealth.org).

