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# Mental Health First Aid

*Learning to Identify, Understand, and Respond to the Mental Health Needs of our Friends and Neighbors*

## The Initiative:

Community Foundation Tampa Bay, in partnership with Love IV Lawrence, St. Petersburg College, Humana, NAMI Pinellas, and the Louis de La Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, has launched the Mental Health First Aid Initiative to:

- Provide viable skills to address mental health challenges
- Raise awareness of the prevalence of mental health issues in the community
- Reduce the stigma

## The Goal:

Train and empower 5,000 key personnel in nonprofits, faith communities and other community settings to identify, understand and respond to signs of addictions and mental illness within the next three years.

## What is Mental Health First Aid?

Mental Health First Aid (the CPR of mental health) is a national certification through the National Council for Behavioral Health that is proven effective. Peer-reviewed studies show that individuals trained in the program:

- Grow knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions
- Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental illness or addiction
- Increase their confidence in and likelihood to help an individual in distress
- Show increased mental wellness themselves

## Why is it Needed?

Even before the pandemic and social unrest of 2020, we knew that mental illness was a serious issue in our community and all communities. Pre-2020 research shows that 1-in-6 adults in the U.S. experience a mental illness within a given year.

A study released by the CDC in August 2020 found that 40 percent of U.S. adults (2 in every 5) are struggling with at least one serious mental health issue during the pandemic.

Those experiencing mental health conditions can be further impacted by stigma, which is caused by fear and a lack of understanding. It can lead to harassment, bullying, violence and discrimination, which can cause isolation, shame, and prevention of treatment for those experiencing mental illness.

## Who Can Use Mental Health First Aid?

Anyone. Mental Health First Aid training is similar to CPR training. It helps people identify, understand and respond to someone who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

## How do I Become a Certified Mental Health First-Aider?

Mental Health First Aid certification is about an 8-hour training course. In the virtual training, participants complete a self-paced introduction to the material that takes about two hours. The real-time online instruction — with between 10 and 30 people in the course — takes five to six hours in one day.

## What Does it Cost?

Community Foundation Tampa Bay is providing the training to those who work in nonprofit organizations, faith communities and educational settings free of charge.

The general public or businesses may access the training for a fee of \$125 per person.

Support the Love IV Lawrence Fund here:  
[https://cftampabay.org/give\\_now/healing/](https://cftampabay.org/give_now/healing/)

