

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW (YEAR 10-12 STUDENTS)

Your child's school is conducting Teen Mental Health First Aid® (MHFA™) training, which gives teenagers the skills they need to recognise and help with mental health problems and crises in their friends, and to get the help of an adult quickly.

Young people will often turn to each other when stressed or upset, and try to help each other, taking too much on. This course teaches them not to try to take on these problems alone.

The course discusses suicide. You may wish to discuss this with your child, if there is a risk they will find it distressing. Be aware that most young people feel empowered by understanding more about suicide even if it feels confronting initially.

This course has not been introduced because of any specific problems at the school. Mental health problems are very common in adolescents. If there has been a student suicide in the school, be aware this specific suicide will not be discussed, nor will any individual student.

Your child might want to talk about the course. The following can help you to have a conversation if this is needed.

Session 1 discusses mental health problems in general and understanding how common and disabling these are in young people. Students also learn about professionals who can help.

Session 2 talks about helping a friend who is in crisis, whether because they are suicidal, engaging in non-suicidal self-injury, using alcohol or other drugs, or experiencing bullying or abuse.

The Action Plan ('Look, Ask, Listen, Help Your Friend') is introduced for the first time, and applied to a crisis situation. You can find details about the Action Plan on the MHFA website listed below.

There is a video which shows a young man helping a friend who is experiencing suicidal thoughts. Participants are told that in a crisis situation it is important to get a responsible adult involved right away.

Session 3 takes a step back and discusses how to help if someone seems to be developing a mental health problem. We don't teach students how to diagnose problems – it's advice about being a supportive friend, encouraging the friend to seek help, and knowing when it's time to get an adult involved.

Your child will bring their manual home after session 3. There are resources for further information in the back and you may want to explore them together. If you wish to learn more now, resources are also provided overleaf.

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If you wish to learn more...

... about mental health problems experienced by young people, visit:

- www.beyondblue.org.au
- www.headspace.org.au
- www.howfaristooofar.org.au
- au.reachout.com
- www.kidshelpline.com.au
- www.lifeline.org.au

... about suicide:

- www.livingisforeverbody.org.au

... about Teen Mental Health First Aid®:

- www.mhfa.com.au/courses/public/types/teen

... about other Mental Health First Aid® courses:

- www.mhfa.com.au

For immediate online help for teenagers:

- www.kidshelp.com.au
- www.eheadspace.org.au

INSTRUCTOR:

You can download a copy of this document in WIMS.

Replace this text with contact details either for a contact within the school or your own details for parents with queries.

Do not make other changes to this document.