

**What Is A Mental Health First Aider?**

This document is designed to help you understand the key elements of what being a Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) entails and the ideal qualities a MHFA will hold. ***This is a working document you can edit to fit your organisation's requirements.***

| **What does a Mental Health First Aider do?** |
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| Mental Health First Aiders are volunteers who provide initial confidential support for individuals experiencing symptoms of mental ill health or emotional distress. These interactions can range from having an initial conversation to supporting and signposting individuals to get appropriate support.  ***Mental Health First Aiders are not trained to be therapists but can offer initial support through non-judgemental listening and guidance.*** |
| **What does being a MHFA entail?** |
| * Uphold the values of MHFA – To be approachable, impartial, non-judgemental, empathetic, trustworthy, patient and a skilled listener. * Contribute to reducing stigma and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing. * Recognise the warning signs of mental ill health or emotional distress and provide confidential and non-judgmental emotional support. * Signpost colleagues to internal and external support options where necessary. * Assess the risk of crises and assist appropriately. * To liaise with and report all safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Lead and/or HR. * Maintain personal and professional boundaries. * Support your fellow MHFAs where necessary. * Attend training and regular meetings where possible around your work commitments. |
| **What are the ideal skills and qualities of a MHFA?** |
| * Ability to uphold confidentiality at all times (unless there is a safeguarding risk). * Ability to actively listen without judgement or prejudice. * Have empathy and compassion for others. * Be approachable. * Communication and relationship-building skills. * Ability to handle difficult conversations discreetly and sensitively. * Self-awareness of own emotional triggers. |
| **What are the benefits of becoming a MHFA?** |
| * Contribute towards a healthy workplace environment by reducing stigma, encouraging conversation around mental health, and providing initial emotional support to those in need. * Utilise and share existing skills to effectively support others. * Develop new listening and communication skills which can be used in all aspects of life. * Opportunity to support your colleagues and provide a safe, confidential, and open space to talk. |