



# Mental Health First Aid – Supporting Youth Course Outline

## Context

The Mental Health Commission of Canada reports that one in every five Canadians experiences a mental health or substance use problem within a given year. These problems often first develop during adolescence or early adulthood. While people often know a lot about physical illness, most people have less knowledge about mental health or substance use problems. This lack of understanding often leads to fear and negative attitudes toward those living with these problems. It prevents people from seeking help for themselves, and from providing appropriate support to people around them.

## Course Objectives

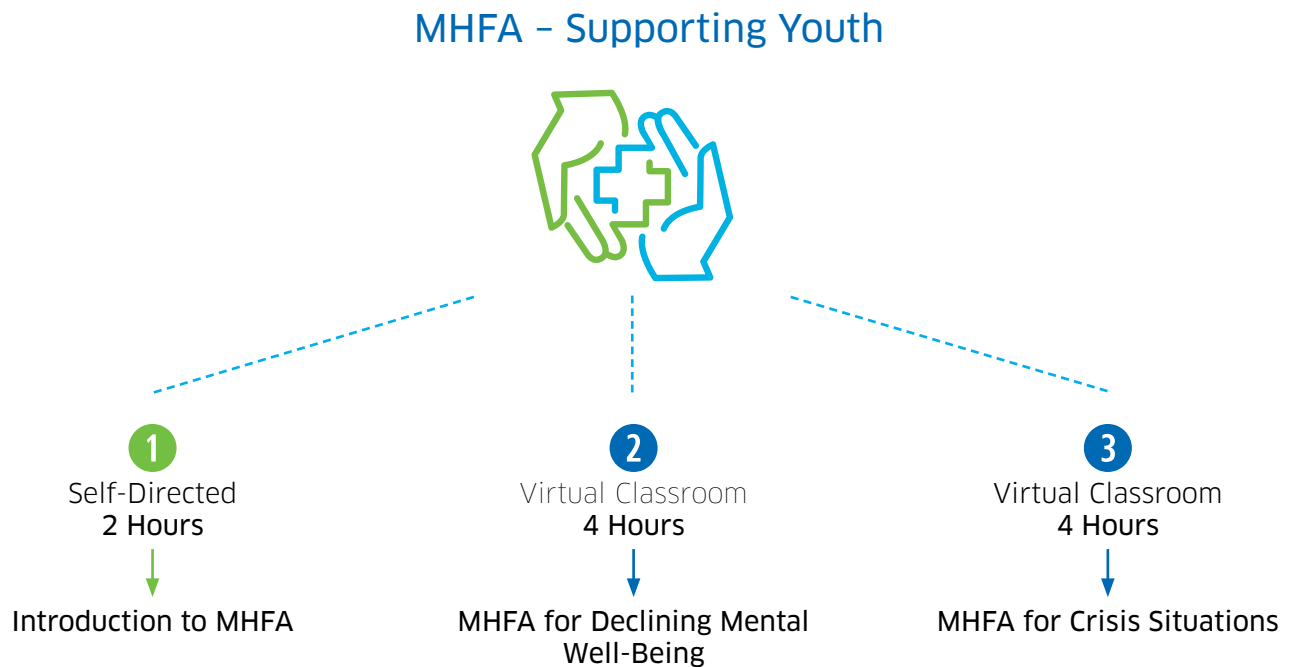
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help provided to a person who may be experiencing a decline in their mental well-being or who might be in a crisis. The course is designed for adults who have frequent contact with young people, for example, parents and guardians, teachers and other school staff, sports coaches, and youth workers.

Course participants will learn how to

- recognize signs that a young person may be experiencing a decline in their mental well-being or who might be in a mental health or substance use crisis
- have conversations that encourage a young person to
  - talk about their mental well-being
  - discuss professional and other supports that could help with recovery to improved mental well-being
  - reach out to these supports
- assist in a mental health or substance use crisis situation
- check in with one's own mental well-being and take action as needed.

## Method

This 10-hour course opens with a self-directed module (Module 1) that focuses on the information and strategies that participants will discuss and practise throughout the virtual classroom modules (Modules 2 and 3). Upon registration, participants receive a link to the “MHFA Reference Guide” that outlines MHFA actions for developing mental health and substance use problems, and mental health crises.



## Topics

### Module 1: Introduction to MHFA

- Introduction to MHFA Actions - ALGEES
- The role of a first aider
- Key knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours
- Impact of stigma on mental well-being
- The range of changes that may indicate a decline in mental well-being
- Risk factors and protective factors that influence mental well-being
- Activity: Use the information in this module to create a Persona of a young person you are likely to encounter

### Module 2: MHFA for Declining Mental Well-Being

- Review of Module 1
- Key skills: Assessing the situation
- Key skills: Communicating respectfully (includes communicating with people from diverse cultures and with members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community)
- Case studies
- Review activity: Use what you have learned to support the Persona created in Module 1

### Module 3: MHFA for Mental Health and Substance Use Crisis Situations

- Responding to possible challenges
- Recognizing possible signs of a crisis
- MHFA actions in a crisis
- Case studies
- Using MHFA actions (ALGEES) for your own self-care