FDAMH
TRAINING ACADEMY

SMHFA

SCOTLAND'S MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Certificated Course

Validated by NHS & Public Health Scotland

NHS SCOTLAND

Public Health Scotland

01324 671600 www.fdamh.org.uk admin@fdamh.org.uk

WHAT IS SMHFA?

Scotland's Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) course is designed to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to support someone who may be experiencing reduced mental wellbeing or emotional distress. Mental Health First Aid does not teach participants to diagnose or treat conditions—instead, it enables them to provide initial, compassionate assistance and how to guide people to appropriate professional help or the situation resolves.

During the course, participants learn to recognise the signs of the most common mental health issues, how to approach difficult conversations safely, and respond effectively in a range of situations, including events such as suicidal thoughts or panic attacks. The training emphasises practical strategies, non-judgemental listening, and promoting recovery by encouraging individuals to access professional support.

By increasing both knowledge and understanding, the SMHFA course plays a vital role in building healthier, more supportive communities and reducing stigma. Whether you are a professional, a volunteer, or simply someone who wants to help others, this course offers valuable tools for contributing to positive mental wellbeing across Scotland.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

Throughout the duration of the course you will learn:

- How to apply Mental Health First Aid, using the simple **5-step approach** that allows you to support others, whilst maintaining your own wellbeing.
- How to recognise early signs of reduced mental health and provide initial early intervention and support.
- The key components of effective listening and responding skills.
- How to ask and respond to someone if you believe they are at risk of suicide.
- A better understanding of a range of common mental health problems, the symptoms that may be present and understand how factors such as alcohol, drugs and isolation can influence mental wellbeing.

- Understanding the connection between mental health, stigma and discrimination.
- Understanding the limits, boundaries and role of the First Aider and how to use self-care and bolster personal resilience to enable First Aiders to work effectively, without impacting their own wellbeing.
- How to promote recovery.
- How to signpost to further support and direct individuals to appropriate professional and community-based services to ensure continued care and recovery.

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE COURSE?

The 12-hour course is typically delivered over two days, providing a continuity of learning. However, it can also be programmed to run over four half-day sessions or six 2-hr sessions to fully accommodate organisational needs.

It is a fully interactive course that facilitates a range of learning needs, including theory, practical skills practice, films and discussion, delivered in a fun and supportive environment.

Upon Completion: On completion of the SMHFA course each delegate will receive a nationally recognised NHS /Public Health Scotland Mental Health First Aid certificate.

Organisational Benefits

Enables Early Intervention

With improved awareness, staff can spot early warning signs of mental distress and provide prompt, informal help before concerns intensify

Improves Workplace Wellbeing

A strong, visible focus on mental health encourages a culture of openness and trust, while lowering stigma throughout the organisation.

Reduces Absenteeism & Presenteeism

Improved support and understanding gives employees more confidence to seek help early, helping to prevent extended leave and working through illness.

Upskilling Staff to Build Capacity

Upskilling staff and building knowledge of suitable internal and external services to signpost to, trained mental health first aiders help reduce the pressure often placed on managers and HR

Boundaries

By developing and training staff they become aware of how to maintain boundaries in their role as a mental health first aider.

For more information:

SCAN ME

Scan the QR code to find out more

Call us on
01324 671 600

OR

email
lisa.alexander@fdamh.org.uk