



What Parents Need to Know

Vicksburg High School and Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (KCMHSAS) are collaborating to provide teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) training as part of a national pilot. This is an evidence-based training that teaches high school students the skills to recognize and respond when their friends are experiencing a mental health and/or substance use challenge. Emphasis is on how to get the help of a trusted adult.

This course is not being introduced because of any specific problems at Vicksburg High School. It is recognized that mental health challenges are very common in adolescents. tMHFA, similar to CPR, is an important step towards ensuring students know what to do and how to get help for a friend experiencing a mental health and/or substance use challenge.

Students trust their friends and often turn to each other when stressed or upset. tMHFA teaches that youth don't have to take on these challenges alone. The course discusses issues like school violence, bullying and suicide. You may wish to discuss these topics with your student before the training or encourage discussions afterward.

The course is being implemented in partnership with Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services tMHFA instructors. All instructors teaching the course have received specialized training and are certified to teach the course by Mental Health First Aid USA® at the National Council for Behavioral Health. Because this is a pilot program, the program is being evaluated by researchers from Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health to assess its effectiveness.

The tenth (10th) grade students will be taught the course in five, 45 minute sessions. To ensure additional support for students taking the training, Vicksburg High School has multiple teachers and other school staff trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid.

The following is an overview of what will be addressed.

Session 1: Part I
This session talks about mental health in general, explains what mental health and substance use challenges are, and how common they are for young people.
Session 1: Part II
This session talks about how people with mental health and substance use challenges can get better and about professionals who can help.
Session 2: Part I
This session talks about helping a friend who is in crisis. Students will learn the Action Plan ("Look, Ask, Listen, Help Your Friend") for the first time and how it can be used in a crisis situation. There is a video that shows a young man helping a friend who is experiencing suicidal thoughts.



teen

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID® USA

Session 2: Part II

This session talks about helping a friend who is in another type of crisis. Situations covered include: threatening violence or harm to others, engaging in non-suicidal self-injury, using alcohol or other drugs, or experiencing a traumatic event such as bullying, abuse, or assault. Students practice using the Action Plan (“Look, Ask, Listen, Help Your Friend”) in these kinds of crisis situations.

Session 3

This session takes a step back and discusses how to help if someone seems to be developing a mental health or substance use challenge. The course does not teach students how to diagnose problems — it provides advice about being a supportive friend, encouraging friends to seek help, and helps students understand when it is time to get an adult involved.

Students will receive a certificate upon course completion. A workbook is used during the course that youth take home after the last session. Resources are listed in the workbook. The following resources are provided.

Resources

Learn more about mental health problems

Kalamazoo County Mobile Crisis Response (MCR)- 24 hours per day
[269-373-6000](tel:269-373-6000)

Teens Health
http://teenshealth.org/teen/your_mind

National Alliance on Mental Illness
www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults

National Institute of Mental Health
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml>.

Learn more about Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid USA
www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org/



teen

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID® USA

National Helplines

If you or someone you know needs immediate help, call 911.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Crisis Text Line

Text “MHFA” to 741741 for free 24/7 crisis counseling.

Visit www.crisistextline.org

You can also encourage your child to talk to their school mental health professionals for additional information and support.

School Contacts

If you have any questions about tMHFA or concerns about your child participating in the training, please contact our school tMHFA Liaison. (*Mr. Brush, Principal*)