



In partnership with
Bradninch Town
Council



Mental Health Matters: How can we learn to be helpful?

An invitation to learn Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

We know that people, any of us, can become mentally unwell at any time but as a society we tend to know much less about how to take care of our mental health than our physical health. This means that we often struggle to know how best to support a friend, family member or colleague experiencing a mental health issue, or where to go for support with our own mental health too. There are many possible ways to improve on this and one helpful and popular option is to spend a couple of days learning what has come to be called Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).

What is MHFA?

MHFA training is a nationally recognised 2 day course which equips anyone to be better able to care for their own mental health and that



of others in their families, neighbourhood or workplace.

It is a brief but highly regarded training which has been taken up very widely across adult and youth settings, including schools and colleges, church and workplace settings and also adapted for the armed forces. Further details can be found at <https://mhfaengland.org> , which includes:

Why Become a Health First Aider?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a training course which teaches people how to identify, understand and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health issue.

MHFA won't teach you to be a therapist, but it will teach you to listen, reassure and respond more appropriately, even in a crisis – and even potentially help to stop a crisis from happening.

You'll learn to recognise warning signs of mental ill health, and develop the skills and confidence to support someone while keeping yourself safe.

You'll also learn how to signpost and enable someone to access the support they might need for recovery or successful management of symptoms. This could include self-help books or websites, accessing therapy services through their GP, their school or place of work, online self-referral, support groups, and more.

What's more, you'll gain an understanding of how to support wellbeing for yourself and tackle stigma in the world around you.

Where did it come from?

The Mental Health First Aid programme began in Australia in 2000 and has since grown into a global movement which has so far delivered training across 24 countries to around 4 million people. MHFA training began in England in 2007 and having been launched by the NHS has since evolved into MHFA England as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company offering training and support as a contribution to public mental health.

And how has it come to us?

National Railway South West is one of many employers who provide MHFA training to their staff in support of being more able caring for their own mental health needs and also to care for their customers. Through our partnership with NRSW we have generously been given access to their skilled trainers who are willing to run a course, possibly two, for us in Bradninch.

Who is it for?

MHFA training has become the 'go-to' course for anyone wanting a short but effective training in how to understand and respond to mental health issues and needs. It is therefore **open to anyone** interested and able to commit the time, but would be of additional value to people working with people in any capacity.

Are there any expectations or responsibilities?

In short – no. It is more a matter of this being an offer and an opportunity for you to spend time learning about mental health with skilled trainers. It is hoped that people will become more comfortable and confident in responding to mental health concerns and engage in learning as a shared contribution to cultivating care in our community - but there are no specific expectations.

What do people learn from this course?

This two day course qualifies you as a Mental Health First Aider, giving you:

- An in-depth understanding of mental health and the factors that can affect wellbeing
- Practical skills to spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues
- Confidence to step in, reassure and support a person in distress
- Enhanced interpersonal skills such as non-judgemental listening
- Knowledge to help someone recover their health by guiding them to further support - whether that's self-help resources, through their employer, the NHS, or a mix

Cost

Our course is being provided for free. Ordinarily MHFA England value this course at £300 per person and actual costs depend on location and instructors. Our course is being provided by our partners in Network Rails South West through the trainers who teach their own staff. All course materials and venue costs are provided free – the main cost is your time ... which you could look upon as an investment for the future.

Format and framework:

- Two day face to face course across four manageable sessions
- Learning takes place through a mix of presentations, group discussions and workshop activities

- Each session is built around a Mental Health First Aid action plan
- There is a limit of 15 places per course so that the instructor can keep people safe and supported while they learn
- We are able to offer two courses if there is sufficient interest.

What you will be able to take away from the course.

Everyone who completes the course gets:

- A certificate of attendance to say you are a Mental Health First Aider
- A manual to refer to whenever you need it
- A quick reference card for the Mental Health First Aid action plan
- A workbook including a helpful toolkit to support your own mental health

Practical planning

The Keynsham (Cricket) Club will provide us with a comfortable and Covid safe setting. Our trainers are available June 7/8 and 9/10 i.e. just after the school summer half term holiday. Each course is for a minimum of 10 people and we will initially aim to fill the first dates and may be able to offer the second too if there is sufficient interest.

Bookings will be via an Eventbrite link to follow asap. Places will be allocated on a 'first come' basis but we will ask people to confirm they can offer the full two day to the training.

We understand it will be difficult to free up 2 days in the week to attend a course but would encourage you to see it as investing your time in your health and awareness of how to help others. Employers may well value their employees having such awareness.

So ... do let us know if you are interested and feel free to get in touch with any questions. Booking link to follow soon.

Take care, and with all good wishes

Glenn, Kate and Sophie

For BradTog MHM