

## Mental Health First Aid at the University of Aberdeen

The University of Aberdeen is committed to promoting a mentally healthy environment for all our staff and students. To ensure we're looking after our mental health as much as our physical health, we have an established network of Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) who will actively promote good wellbeing and mental health practices. MHFA volunteers have the skills and knowledge to initially support an individual and to help them to information about services that can help.

Mental Health First Aid skills and knowledge are intended to be part of everyone's personal skillset, as such it is recognised that these skills can be used in any situation with anyone, be that to support a staff member or a student. However, the role of MHFA within the university setting is intended to be primarily support available for staff.

MHFA's will help to reduce the stigma around mental health to create and contribute to a positive culture by:

- Proactively sharing support and wellbeing information.
- Empowering and encouraging others to prioritise good wellbeing practices.
- Encouraging others to engage in wellbeing activities, events, and development opportunities that help to prioritise wellbeing.
- Actively promote themselves as someone open to conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

They can also play an active role in assisting a person experiencing mental ill-health to access support by:

- Starting a supportive conversation with someone who may be experiencing mental ill-health or emotional distress.
- Listening to the person non-judgementally.
- Asking about suicide or self-harm and, if needed, helping to access the appropriate services.
- Encouraging others to access available support - encouraging and supporting them to access internal/external support and signposting to what is available.
- Maintaining confidentiality unless there is a concern of risk to themselves or others, discussing with the individual if confidentiality needs to be breached.

### Disclaimer

The MHFA training course and other development opportunities through the network, do not train people to be mental health workers. It offers basic general information about mental health problems. The knowledge presented and understanding developed in the course aims to give participants confidence in approaching a person experiencing mental ill-health.

Mental Health First Aid is an initial response and participants can help by listening and signposting to information about mental health services and further support available. They cannot provide an alternative to counselling, nor can they offer ongoing support.

### **Mental Health First Aid - Member Commitment**

- I will challenge stigma about mental ill health in my workplace.
- I will be a listener and provide initial support to those experiencing mental health difficulties.
- I will respect confidentiality and create a safe environment in my workplace to discuss mental health issues and concerns.
- I will signpost and support access to information about mental health and wellbeing services.