

Mental Health First Aid Basics

Tools & Techniques

Why do we need to talk about this?

Because depression is building your jobs.

Because anxiety is building your jobs.

Because, on average, it takes 11 years for someone to seek help from the onset of symptoms.

Because 2.5 hours of productivity are lost every day due to stress, mental distractions, and unresolved conflict.

Because mental health isn't just a personal issue—it's a job site issue.

What is Mental Health First Aid?

It's responding to someone who is experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis—just like you would administer first aid for a physical injury.

What qualifies as a mental health challenge? It depends. People handle things differently, but some common contributors include:

- Relationship stress (at home or on the job)
- Financial stress
- Workplace stress

When someone's coping strategies are maxed out, that's when they hit a crisis point—and that's when Mental Health First Aid can make a difference.

Signs Someone Might Be Struggling

If you notice a shift in behaviour, it's worth checking in. Here are a few things to watch for:

- ✓ Withdrawal—Are they pulling back from activities or isolating themselves?
- ✓ Increase in activity—Or are they suddenly going non-stop, working longer hours, or overcommitting?
- ✓ Increased sensitivity—Are they on edge, snapping more easily, or losing patience faster than usual?

How to Do On the Jobsite

Talking about mental health can feel uncomfortable, but it's natural for us to notice when something's off—we spend a lot of time together on the job. Remind your crew that everyone experiences mental health challenges throughout the year; what matters is how we handle them. Just like physical injuries, the right response can determine how severe or long-lasting the impact is.

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How to Administer Mental Health First Aid

Check Yourself First

- Are you emotionally capable of supporting this person right now?
- Are they showing signs of being a risk to themselves or others?

Take Action Based on the Situation

- If you're not in a place to support, let someone else know.
- If they're at risk of harming themselves or others, initiate crisis response immediately.
 - Crisis response could mean: Notifying a supervisor, calling a mental health professional, or dialling a crisis line.

Check-In

- Be genuine. Let them know what you've noticed.
- Ask, "How can I support you right now?"

Listen & Validate

- Don't jump in with solutions—just listen.
- Validation matters. You don't have to fix it, just acknowledge it:
 - "That sounds really tough."
 - "I get why that would be frustrating."
 - "Thanks for sharing that sounds like a lot to be going through."

Encourage Them to Get Connected to Support

- Let them know they don't have to go through it alone.
- Ask if they've talked to a friend, family member, or support resource about what's going on.
- If they're open to it, help them connect to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a crisis line, or a professional who can provide further support.
- Remind them: Getting help isn't a sign of weakness—it's a step toward strength.

Self-Care After Providing Mental Health First aid

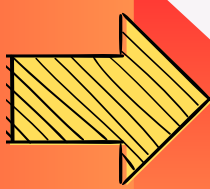
Supporting someone through a tough time can take a toll on you, too. After checking in with someone, make sure you check in with yourself:

- Take a moment to decompress—step outside, take a few deep breaths, or grab a coffee.
- Talk it out—if appropriate, debrief with a trusted coworker, friend, or supervisor (while respecting confidentiality).
- Set boundaries—you can support someone, but you're not responsible for fixing everything.
- Do something that recharges you—listen to music, exercise, or take time for a hobby.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID BASICS

The following steps can help support an individual experiencing a mental health challenge or emergency.

Warning Signs



- Sudden mood or behaviour changes
- Expressions of hopelessness or distress
- Increased irritability or aggression

Assess Situation

- Is the person in immediate danger? (self-harm)
- Are you capable of supporting?

Check-In Be genuine



- Use phrases like:
- You are on my mind and wanted to see how you're doing.
 - I've noticed you seem distracted lately, how can I help?

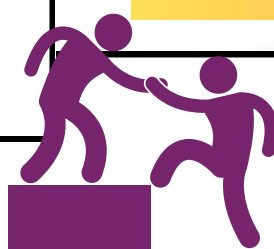
Listen & Validate

Non-judgmentally

- Use phrases like:
- It sounds like things are challenging, thank you for sharing.



Encourage Support



- Self-Help Strategies
- Support Groups
- Connect with EAP
- Seek professional help to discuss therapy or medication treatment options.