



Mental Health First Aid

Supporting Youth – Handout

About this document

This handout accompanies the “MHFA - Supporting Youth” course. It includes case studies and instructions for activities that are in Modules 2 and 3.

It also includes an outline of MHFA actions (ALGEES) and the key considerations for each. The ALGEES poem is included below to provide a reminder of the key concepts.

Please have a printed copy or an electronic copy of this handout available to you during Modules 2 and 3.

ALGEES Poem

By Colin Lampard, August 2011

<p>Approach the person, Do they have a crisis to share, Behaviour or distress,</p> <p>Let them know that you care.</p> <p>How are they feeling, And when did it take hold, You may need direct questions, If of facts you are not told.</p> <p>Listen non-judgmentally, To ALL that is said, Avoid expressing judgements, And confusing their head.</p> <p>Communicate empathetically, To the words that are spoken, Use verbal and nonverbal skills, So your approach is more than token.</p> <p>Make it easy for them to talk freely, About their troubles and concerns, For before you can assist, Of their troubles you must learn.</p> <p>Give support and information, Emotional support too, Be empathetic,</p>	<p>Hope of recovery, Or help for an overwhelming task, For if they're suffering For help they'll not ask.</p> <p>Notify them of options, Where assistance can be found, Medication, counselling, or therapy, Family and friends are sound.</p> <p>Assistance with goals, Or things which cause trouble, Be positive always, Don't burst their bubble.</p> <p>Encourage other supports, Family, workplace, and friends, For a compassion to care, Never ever ends.</p> <p>Remember too, Self-care for yourself, For we are humans and can't Put our emotions on the shelf.</p> <p>Respect their privacy, And their dignity too, For they bared their soul, When they spoke with you.</p>
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Module 2

Case Studies

1. Possible Substance Use Problem / Mario

About Mario	Lately, you notice:	You are aware:
One of your part-time employees Grade 12 student Has always come to work on time Friendly with customers	Frequently late for work Signs of being hungover Abrupt with customers Low energy and looks sad	Mario's father lives with a drinking problem

2. Possible Depression / Jafari

About Jafari	When you talk to Jafari he tells you...
A university student on the basketball team you coach Arrived in Canada with his family as immigrants 2 years ago High achiever, with good grades, active in sports Parents insisted he give up some sports to focus on improving his grades	He has been fighting constantly with his parents His parents compare him to his older brothers who have excelled at university Lately, he is no longer interested in university and is thinking of quitting because it all seems pointless He sleeps more and does not look forward to going out with friends

3. Possible Anxiety / Amelie

About Amelie	When you talk to Amelie she tells you she...
A co-worker and good friend She was nearly in a car accident while driving She was not at fault, but she blames herself and over-analyzes her response	Doesn't want to go back to driving Is irritable and jumps at the slightest sound Is not sleeping well Drinks a little to help her fall asleep

4. Possible Feeding and Eating Disorder / Celeste

About Celeste	You notice that she...
Your niece Puts herself down constantly, comparing her appearance to others' She shakes her head and changes the subject when you tell her she looks pretty Currently staying with you while her parents are on holidays	Spends lots of time in front of a mirror, adjusting her clothing and posture Weighs herself several times a day Exercises extensively After visiting the bathroom, her eyes are bloodshot and watering

5. Possible Non-Suicidal Self-Injury (NSSI) / Andrea

About Andrea	Recently, you have noticed...
<p>Andrea is a university student</p> <p>During previous encounters with you, you notice that she is friendly, although a bit quiet and reserved</p>	<p>Andrea has many different scars on her arms</p> <p>She seems embarrassed that you have noticed them and covers her arms up quickly</p> <p>The next time you are to meet with Andrea, she doesn't show up or call in</p> <p>Two days later you run into her at a coffee shop and she avoids you</p>

6. Possible Psychosis / Asad

About Asad	Recently, you have noticed...
<p>A member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community</p> <p>Uses the pronoun "they/their/them"</p> <p>A university student that moved in next door to you one year ago</p> <p>Very friendly and often stops to chat with you</p>	<p>When you cross paths, they cross the road as if to avoid you</p> <p>They stay home most of the time listening to loud music</p> <p>Currently...</p> <p>You are wakened by loud music from their home</p> <p>When you ask them to turn the music down, they seem agitated</p> <p>When you ask if they are okay, they want to know if "they" sent you</p> <p>They tell you that they can't turn the music down because if they do "they" will abduct them</p>

Activity: Review of Module 2 (Breakout groups)

With your breakout group, ask for a volunteer to share one thing that they learned from Modules 1 and 2 that they could use when offering MHFA to the Persona they created at the end of Module 1.

Then, invite another participant to do the same.

Please note that you are not being asked for details on the Persona, but a strategy you learned that would be helpful when offering MHFA to this Persona.

Once it is time to move from the breakout group back to the larger group, the moderator will move you out of the breakout room.

Module 3

Case Studies

7. Possible Overdose from Alcohol / Stranger

You are walking home and come across a teenage girl who...

Looks to be about age 14-15
Is standing beside you waiting for the lights to change
Looks confused and lost with glazed-over eyes
It's dark out and you wonder if she's safe, so you keep an eye on her as you continue on your way
She stops at a park bench and starts vomiting
You rush over to help her
She says everything is spinning
She curls up into the fetal position

8. Possible Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviours / Aamna

About Aamna	Recently, you have noticed...
You visit Aamna once a week to give her piano lessons	Aamna has not been practising piano, which seems unusual
You have been teaching Aamna for three years	She complains about aches and pains and seems irritable
One of her schoolmates recently died by suicide	When she makes a mistake and strikes the wrong key, she sometimes cries and sometimes gets angry with herself
She is usually excited and energetic and shows great improvement every week	

9. Possible Panic Attack / Stranger

You are at a hockey game watching your son play. At the concession stand, you notice a young girl standing in the middle of the crowd

She looks pale and distressed
She is not someone you know, but she suddenly grabs your arm
She is clutching her chest with her other hand and sounds as though she is struggling to breathe
She manages to say, in a strangled voice, "Help me, the room is spinning!"

10. Possible Severe Psychotic Episode / Stranger

You walk into a store where you see young woman wandering about in an agitated but aimless fashion

She looks hyper-alert and is talking to herself
Other shoppers are becoming distressed and some of the store employees are trying to talk to her
As you watch, she becomes more and more agitated and begins to yell that someone is coming to get her
One of the employees tells another employee to call the police

Activity: Possible Challenges

With your breakout group:

- Identify spokesperson.
- Consider each possible challenge identified below.
- Discuss communication strategies for responding and be prepared to share your answers with the larger group.

Possible challenges:

What if the young person is:

- reluctant to talk?
- reluctant to reach out to supports?
- reacts with aggressive behaviours?

Once it is time to move from the breakout group back to the larger group, the moderator will move you out of the breakout room.



MHFA Action Plan (ALGEES)

A pproach the person, assess and assist with any crisis	<p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is this a crisis? If yes, connect to crisis supports right away. If not, continue with the following actions.• Where is a good place to make your approach?• When is a good time?• How would you express your concerns? (What would you say and do?)• Are there times and places you should avoid?
L isten and communicate non-judgmentally	<p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What attitudes do I want to convey?• What verbal/nonverbal skills help to express these attitudes?• What should I avoid?
G ive reassurance and information	<p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can I say to offer emotional support (reassurance)?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- that they may be experiencing a mental health or substance use problem- that they are not alone- that supports are available that have helped others.• What sort of practical support might the young person need?• What sort of information can I offer?
E ncourage the person to reach out to appropriate professional help	<p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can I facilitate help-seeking?• What are the local options?• Does the young person need professional help?• What if the young person does not want professional help?
E ncourage other supports	<p>Key considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What other supports are available?• What self-help strategies are there?• How can I encourage the young person to use these self-help strategies?
S elf-care for the first aider	<p>Practise self-care</p> <p>Use these actions to check in with yourself before and after offering MHFA, and reach out to supports if needed.</p>





ALGEES Worksheet

<p>Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis</p>	
<p>Listen and communicate non-judgmentally</p>	
<p>Give reassurance and information</p>	
<p>Encourage the person to reach out to appropriate professional help</p>	
<p>Encourage other supports</p>	
<p>Self-care for the first aider</p>	

