

OVERVIEW OF THE QUALITY INSTITUTE'S MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAININGS

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based, early-intervention course that teaches participants how to assist and support others who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge.

MHFA was developed by the [National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#). The training is offered both virtually and in-person, using interactive real-life scenarios, activities, and videos to teach the skills needed to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges, as well as how to provide initial support until individuals are connected to appropriate professional help.



Program participants receive a certification in Mental Health First Aid.

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute's experienced trainers offer three types of [Mental Health First Aid \(MHFA\) training](#):



- **Adult MHFA** – For people working primarily with adults in the workplace or community. The course combines evidence-based instruction, small-group discussions, and hands-on practice using realistic scenarios. Topics covered include depression and mood disorders, anxiety disorders, trauma, and substance use disorders.
- **Youth MHFA** – For educators, coaches, and those working primarily with children and teens. This course follows a similar structure to the Adult MHFA sessions but teaches participants how to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues in young people, including anxiety, depression, substance use, and eating disorders.
- **Perinatal MHFA** – This course is for people working with pregnant or postpartum patients and clients, using maternity-specific scenarios developed by the Quality Institute that mirror real prenatal and postpartum challenges. The scenarios have been approved for use by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. In New Jersey,



mental health conditions are a leading cause of pregnancy-related maternal mortality and over 90% of those deaths are preventable. It is critical for health care providers and other people working with perinatal patients to have training to recognize signs of mental health distress early and guide clients to appropriate help.

Quality Institute MHFA training attendees consistently report the value of the trainings and the difference it has made in their ability to serve their clients, patients and the community:

*As a Medical Doctor, the Mental Health First Aid training has been invaluable in broadening my understanding of mental illness and helped me take a **more empathetic approach to my patients** as well as my interpersonal relationships.*

– **Dr. Rubina Bhatia**, MWC Co-Chair & Board of Health Chairperson, Old Tappan (*Adult Mental Health First Aid*)

*This training is essential for anyone working with youth or adults in positions of support and care. Teachers, coaches, clergy, and community leaders should prioritize MHFA training. **I'm more confident that I can help people find the help they need and save lives.***

– **Dennis O'Neill**, Pastor (*Youth Mental Health First Aid*)

*A lot of parents are not aware of how pregnancy can affect, or heighten existing, mental health changes in the postpartum period. There is a need for education for them, and for me. As a doula, you receive education on anxiety and mood disorders. But you are not trained in how to approach it, how to talk to parents, or the resources. Mental Health First Aid allowed me to **learn and identify mental health challenges in a non-judgmental way.***

– **Kesmeel Davis**, Postpartum Doula (*Perinatal Mental Health First Aid*)

For more information on Quality Institute trainings or to obtain a proposal for MHFA training within your community or organization, **contact Julie DeSimone, Director of Community Health at jdesimone@njhcqi.org** or call: 609-452-5980. For more information to go www.njhcqi.org.