



# MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AND NACo



*The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The group was very impressed with the trainers and felt the curriculum was extremely useful in helping the county workforce address and support the need of county employees who may be experiencing mental health and/or substance use needs. The training was comprehensive, skills-oriented and provided the essential tools and guidance to support our staff.”*

— **Michael Orth,**

Commissioner, Westchester County, NY, Department of Community Mental Health

## WHY MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), a skills-based training administered by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, teaches people how to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges in their peers, friends and colleagues.

To help the National Association of Counties (NACo) realize its vision of creating healthy, safe and vibrant counties across America, the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and NACo are partnering to offer crucial MHFA trainings to county employees and the communities they serve. The National Council-NACo partnership will support elected officials and county staff, who are asking for help with their own mental health and wellbeing. And, by extension, create a framework for counties to destigmatize mental health and substance use issues as they provide community residents with more equitable access to quality mental health and substance use treatment services.

Less than  
**10%**  
of employees feel their workplace is free of stigmas about mental health.

— McKinsey Center for Societal Benefit

Nearly  
**1 IN 5**  
adults in the U.S. lives with a mental illness.

— National Institute of Mental Health

Counties are the entry point to the criminal justice system, and  
**64%**  
of jail inmates have a mental illness.

— NACo

**98%**  
of MHFA at Work participants in 2021 said they would recommend the training to a colleague.

— MHFA

## WHAT MHFA COVERS

- Noticing signs and symptoms of substance use and mental health challenges.
- Navigating difficult conversations about mental health.
- Knowing that recovery is possible – and how to support it.
- Tackling mental health stigma in the workplace.
- Understanding principles of safety and privacy. Building resilience and strategies to alleviate burnout.
- Implementing a 5-step MHFA Action Plan.
- Reinforcing relevant Employee Resource Groups, employee benefits and HR initiatives.

## WHO SHOULD TAKE IT

- County employees at all levels, including elected officials and county staff across all departments and organizations.
- Human resources and benefits partners, senior leaders and front-line managers.
- First responders including law enforcement, corrections officers, fire and EMS services
- Hospital and nursing home staff
- School teachers, administrators and youth-serving staff

## Sources:

- Coe, E., Cordina, J., Enomoto, K., Seshan, N. (2021, July 23). Overcoming stigma: three strategies toward better mental health in the workplace. McKinsey Quarterly. <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare-systems-and-services/our-insights/overcoming-stigma-three-strategies-toward-better-mental-health-in-the-workplace>
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). (n.d.). Mental illness. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>
- National Association of Counties. (n.d.) Behavioral health matters to counties. <https://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/NACo%20Behavioral%20Health%20Priorities.pdf>