



Mental Health First Aid ACTION PLAN



- A**pproach the person, assess and assist with any crisis
- L**isten and communicate non-judgementally
- G**ive support and information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage other support

Action 1: Approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis

The initial task is to approach the person, look out for any crises and assist the person to deal with them. The key points are to:

- Approach the person with your concerns about their mental health problem
- Find a suitable time and space where you both feel comfortable
- If the person does not initiate a conversation with you about how they are feeling, you should say something to them
- Respect the person's privacy and confidentiality
- Look out for any indications the person may be in crisis. Possible crises are that:
 - The person may harm themselves, e.g. by attempting suicide, by using substances to become intoxicated, or by engaging in non-suicidal self-injury;
 - The person experiences extreme distress, e.g. such as a panic attack, a reaction to a traumatic event or a severe psychotic state;
 - The person's behaviour is very disturbing to others, e.g. if they become aggressive or lose touch with reality.



Action 2: Listen and communicate non-judgementally

Listening to the person is a very important action. When listening, it is important to set aside any judgements made about the person or their situation and avoid expressing those judgements. Most people who are experiencing distressing emotions and thoughts want to be listened to empathetically before being offered options and resources that may help them. When listening non-judgementally, the first aider adopts certain attitudes and uses verbal and non-verbal listening skills that:

- Allow the listener to really hear and understand what is being said to them, and
- Make it easier for the other person to feel they can talk freely about their problems without being judged.

It is important to listen non-judgementally at all times when providing mental health first aid.

Action 3: Give support and information

Once a person with a mental health problem has felt listened to, it can be easier for the first aider to offer support and information. The support to offer at the time includes emotional support, such as empathising with how they feel and giving them hope for recovery, and practical help with tasks that may seem overwhelming at the moment. The first aider can also ask the person if they would like some information about mental health problems.

Action 4: Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help

The first aider can also tell a person about any options available to them for help and support. A person with mental health problems will generally have a better recovery with appropriate professional help. However, they may not know about the various options that are available to them, such as medication, counselling or psychological therapy, support for family members, assistance with vocational and educational goals, and assistance with income and accommodation.

Action 5: Encourage other supports

Encourage the person to use self-help strategies and to seek the support of family, friends and others. Other people who have experienced mental health problems can also provide valuable help in the person's recovery.