



# More Than 11,000 People Trained in Mental Health First Aid in Allegheny County: A 2017 Update



Prepared by the Allegheny County Department of Human Services and Allegheny Health Choices, Inc.

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## CULTIVATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

National statistics indicate that one in five individuals has a behavioral health diagnosis (e.g., anxiety, depression, substance use disorders). The Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) is focused on educating the public about the signs and symptoms of mental illness and substance use disorder and encouraging access to treatment and support.

### 11,129 People Have Been Educated Through MHFA Since 2013

Number of People Educated



## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID: AN EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGY THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) teaches community members how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. This training gives people the skills to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem, and making connections to the appropriate service. Much like the concepts of CPR, MHFA provides individuals with the skills to assist someone until professional help is available.

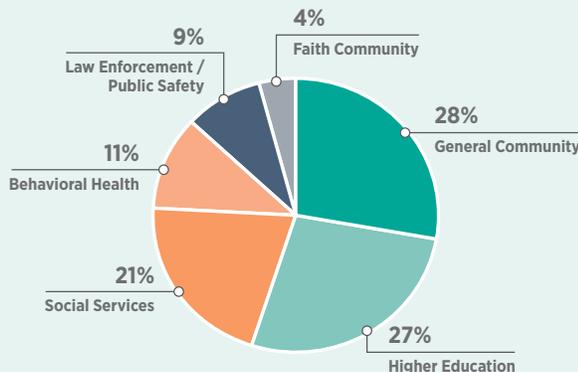
## SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COLLABORATIVE OF TRAINERS

Allegheny County was an early and active adopter of the MHFA program. Beginning in 2009, we developed the Southwestern PA MHFA Collaborative of Trainers to support the local MHFA training community and underwrite costs for eligible trainings. The Collaborative has supported train-the-trainer sessions since 2012.

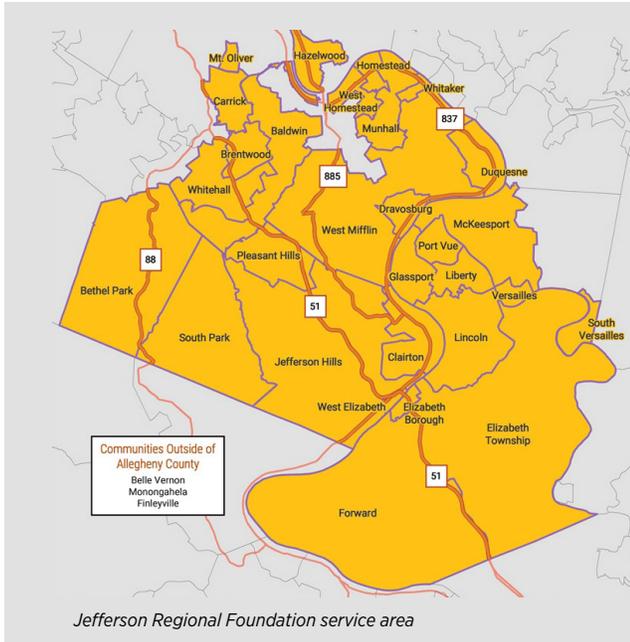
The Collaborative, administered by AHCI on our behalf, currently consists of 152 trainers from 75 organizations throughout Southwestern PA. In 2017, the Southwestern Pennsylvania MHFA Collaborative's trainers conducted 176 MHFA trainings. Audiences included first responders, public schools, universities, churches and social service providers.

### MHFA Trainings Reach Diverse Populations

176 MHFA Trainings in 2017



<sup>1</sup> For more information about MHFA as an evidence-based practice see <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/about/research>.



**LOCAL GRANTS SUPPORT EXPANSION EFFORTS**

**Jefferson Regional Foundation Focuses on Improving Health Outcomes in the Community**

The Jefferson Regional Foundation (JRF) aims to improve the health and well-being of the community by connecting individuals with each other and with services, and by educating the public on mental health and substance use disorder issues.

Since July of 2016, JRF has trained 13 MHFA trainers who have gone on to deliver over 40 trainings to community and faith-based organizations throughout the Jefferson Hospital service area. Each participant receives the new Jefferson Community Directory, which outlines resources throughout the area with a focus on Allegheny County's southern neighborhoods.

**Specialty Curricula Trainings**

AUDIENCE	2016	2017
Public Safety	1	4
Veterans	1	0
Older Adults	2	16
Higher Education	7	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>30</b>

**SPECIALTY CURRICULA: TAILORED TO MEET SPECIFIC NEEDS**

Specialty curricula have been developed to provide additional content for those working with specific populations, such as first responders, veterans, educators and senior care employees. Trainers must receive additional training and certification to train these modules. There was an increase in specialty trainings delivered within Allegheny County between 2016 and 2017.

**NEXT STEPS**

Allegheny County will continue to support the expansion of MHFA as an essential tool to increase knowledge and skills for community members and to encourage individuals to access available services. Pittsburgh will be the host site for another MHFA Train the Trainer session in early 2019.

**ALLEGHENY COUNTY BRIDGES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND CHILD WELFARE**

Allegheny County is committed to improving the System of Care for children, ages five through 17, involved with the child welfare system who also have serious emotional challenges. DHS, peer supports, and provider organizations have become a community of practice (CoP) with a shared vision. The goals of the CoP are to improve access, coordination and integration of behavioral health and child welfare services and to empower youth, families, providers

and partners. MHFA Training is one component that assists in building a common culture and language across systems with regards to behavioral health challenges and resources.

Twenty-two professionals were trained to deliver Youth MHFA in October 2017. An additional 14 people were trained as trainers in March 2018. To date, over 30 trainings have been provided for CoP partner organizations, DHS staff and school districts.