

Mental Health First Aid Training

The ASU Wellness Working Group encourages each dojo to sponsor one or more people in the dojo to become trained in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). MHFA shares the same overall purpose as traditional first aid – to save lives and reduce harm.

- **What is it?**
 - A course like CPR or First Aid, but to recognize and provide on-site urgent care to people experiencing a mental health crisis, until their care can be taken over by trained professionals. It is like providing CPR until the EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) arrives.
 - It does not turn people into psychologists or counselors any more than CPR training turns someone into a heart surgeon. It simply teaches first aid to help recognize that someone might need help related to a mental health issue, and to assist in getting that person to proper help.
 - The original course is described at: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>
 - A 1-page explanation at https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/22.06.17_Adult-MHFA-Flier.pdf
- **Why might it be helpful?**
 - 1 in 5 people in the US lives with a mental illness. Hence, we can assume that about 20% of people in any Aikido dojo might have a mental illness.
 - While anyone in any environment might experience a mental health crisis, it might be a bit more common in Aikido because 1) some people seek out Aikido to learn skills to help them manage mental health issues and 2) the context of being ‘attacked’ on the mat may trigger some people.
- **Who should do it?**
 - Depending on the size of the dojo, perhaps 1-2 people who are in the dojo regularly could become trained and serve as a resource for the dojo. For issues that are not urgent, others who observe concerning behavior could consult with those with MHFA training.
 - The person who chooses to get training must be interested in doing so and willing to serve in the role of the mental health ‘CPR’ provider should the need arise. Just as some people are better suited to doing CPR in an emergency, some are better suited to MHFA. The person who becomes MHFA trained does not need to be a senior member of the dojo or any specific Aikido rank.
- **How to get trained?**
 - Information about the original Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training is available at: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>. They have a list of all courses being offered by location.
 - The course is 7-12 hours and can be entirely on-site or blended online and on-site.
 - The course is sometimes sponsored and free to people signing up, while others may cost up to \$170 (one was \$0, another \$80, so quite variable).