



The Power of Mental Health First Aid

A webinar on the impact of The National Council on Wellbeing's Mental Health
First Aid course

**As you enter the webinar, please share your name, location, and
position in the chat..**

January 9, 2025

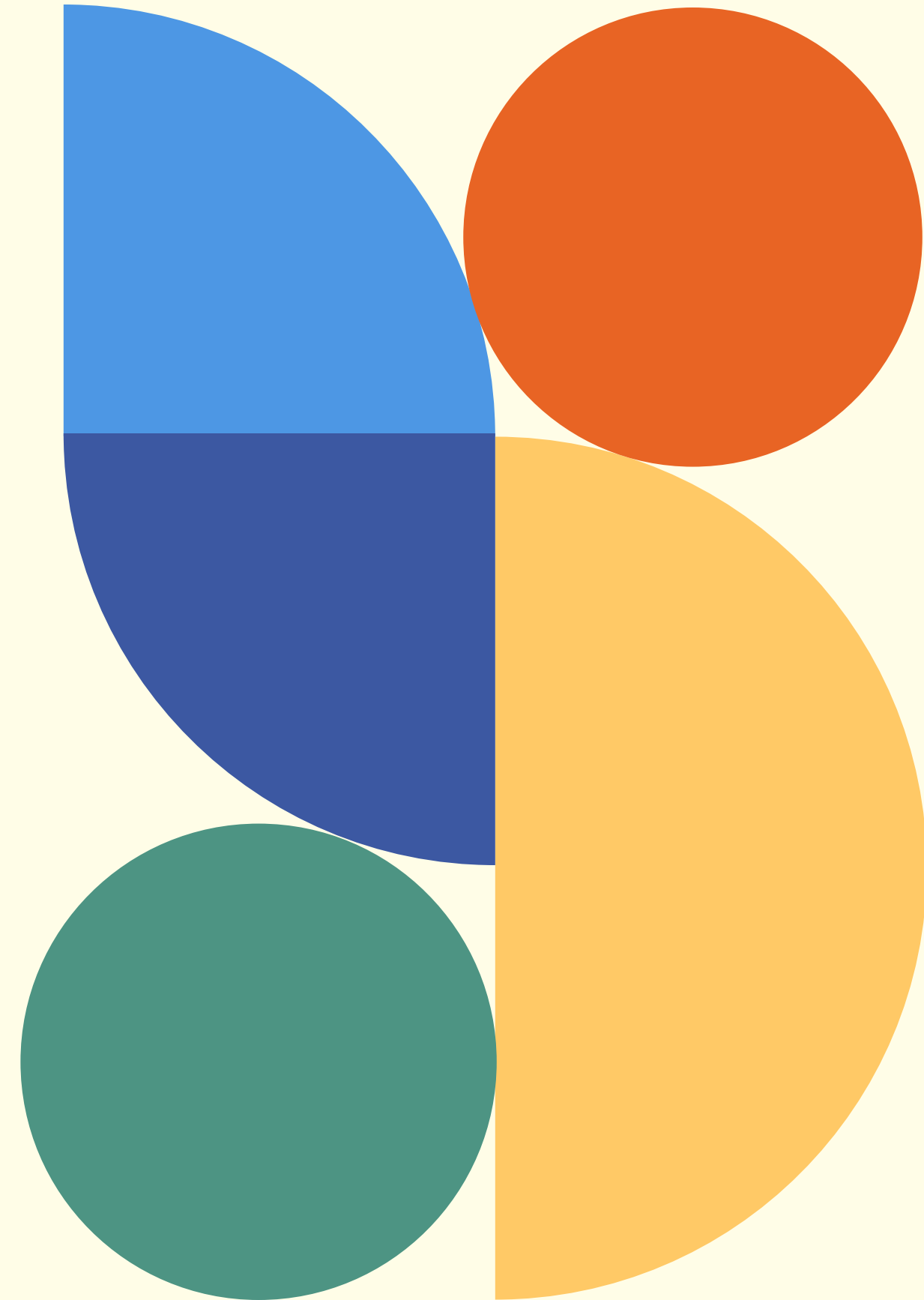
11:00am MT

Network of the National Library of
Medicine, Region 4

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

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University of Colorado, Denver
Certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor





About the Speaker

I'm Victoria, from the University of Colorado, Denver.

- **Certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor**
- **Assistant Director of Health Promotion & Basic Needs**

Learning Agenda

What we'll discuss today



What is the National Council on Well-Being's "Mental Health First Aid" (MHFA) course



The Goals, The Impact, and The Reach



The structure of the course



Substance Misuse in MHFA



Resources & Opportunities

Disclaimer:

MHFA covers topics that can be emotionally activating. The topics of mental health challenges, suicide, and substance misuse challenges will be mentioned in this webinar today. Please take care of yourself and feel free to step away if the content becomes difficult at anytime.

Resources:

If you need to talk, the 988 Lifeline is here.

At the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we understand that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to, our caring counselors are here for you. You are not alone.





Charting Our Course: The National Council's Five-Year Strategic Plan



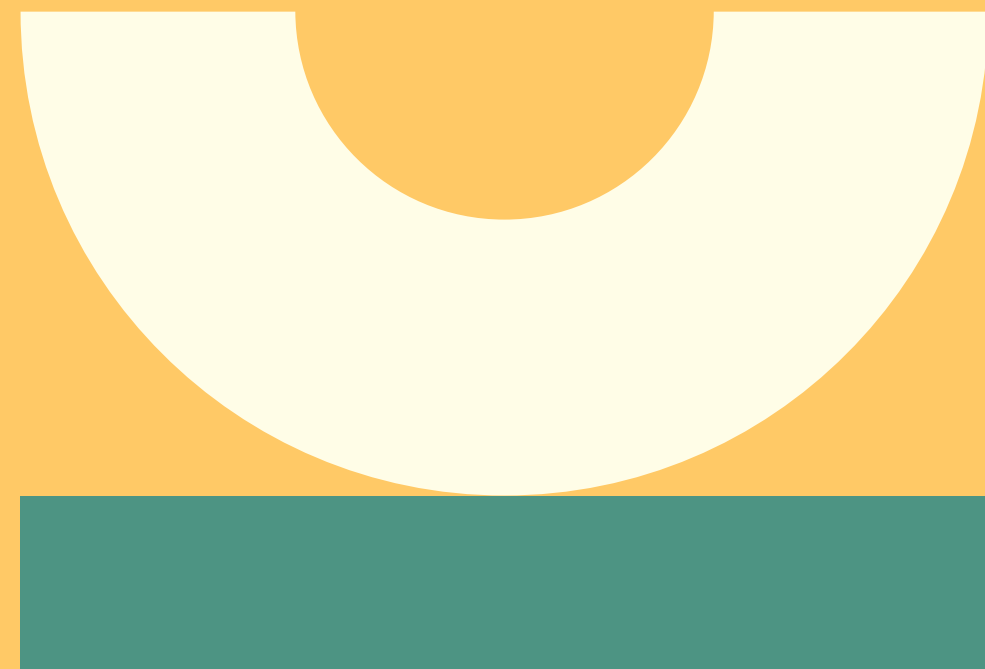
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NATIONAL COUNCIL
for Mental  *Wellbeing*

HEALTHY MINDS ■ STRONG COMMUNITIES

TheNationalCouncil.org

Watch on  YouTube



Goals of Mental Health First Aid as a Program

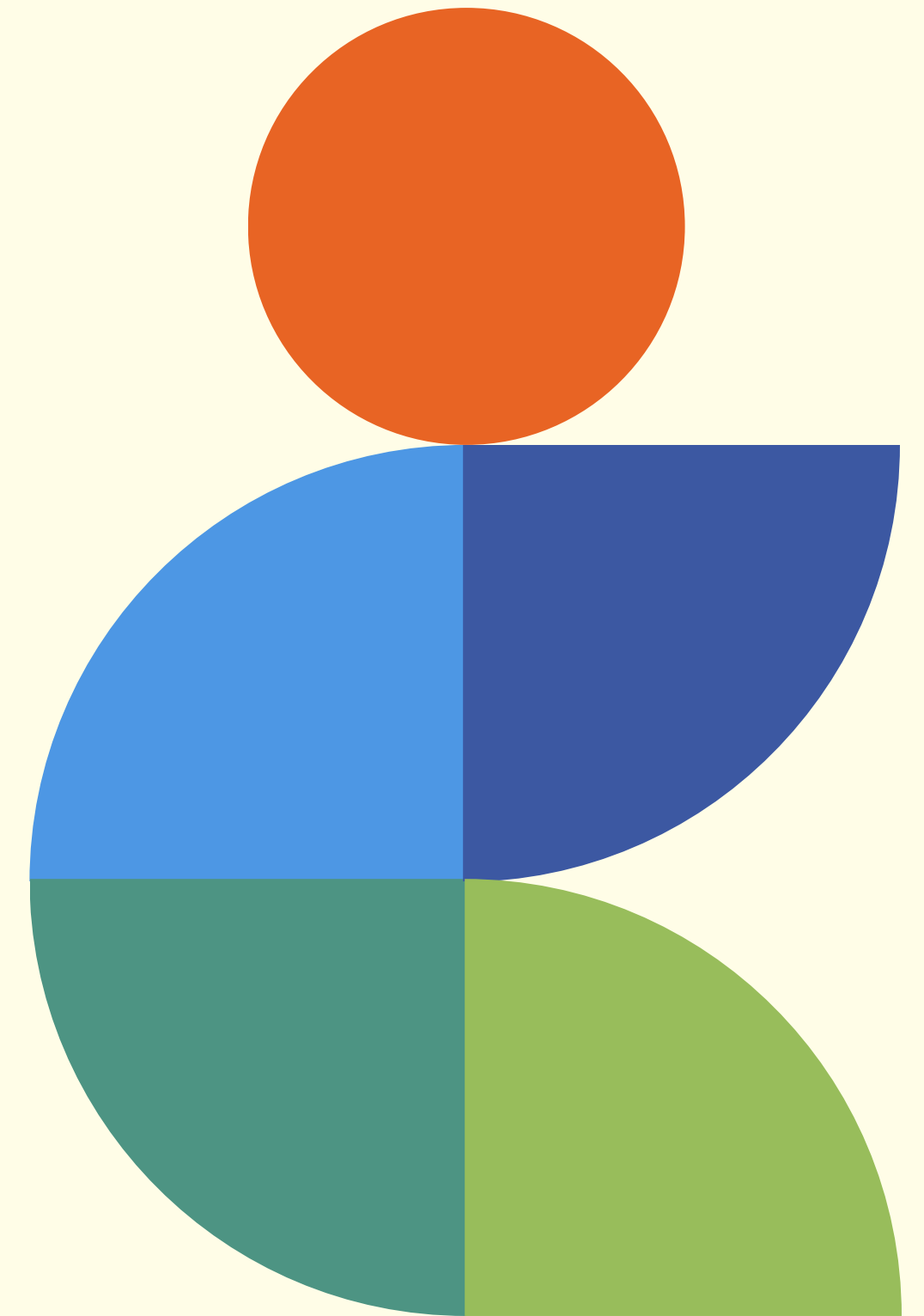
The vision is for Mental Health First Aid to become as common as CPR and for Mental Health First Aid training to be available to everyone in the United States.

One objective of the MHFA course is to demystify the whole topic of mental illness - to increase mental health literacy and to decrease stigma.

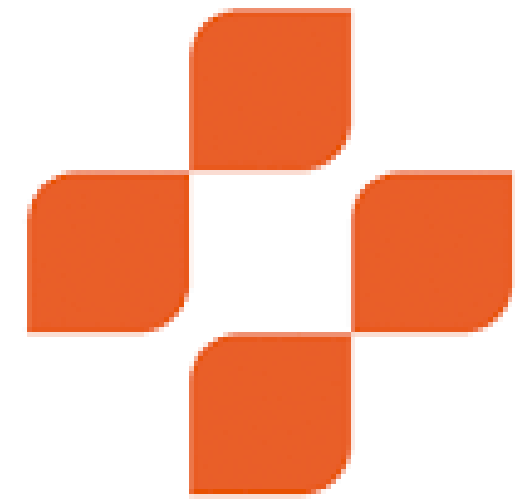
Disclaimer: The content of Mental Health First Aid is not intended to be, and should not be, used as a substitute for medical care, counseling, peer support, or treatment of any kind.

History of MHFA

- The program originated in Australia in 2000 and has since been adopted by more than 25 countries across the globe.
- The course content is evidence-based, and evaluation studies have demonstrated the course is effective.
- In 2008, the Adult MHFA program was brought to the US through a partnership between the National Council on Mental Wellbeing and the states of Maryland and Missouri.
- The Youth MHFA course was brought to the US in 2012, and there is now a TeenMHFA course as well.



What is Mental Health First Aid?



Mental Health
FIRST AID



Four Million Strong



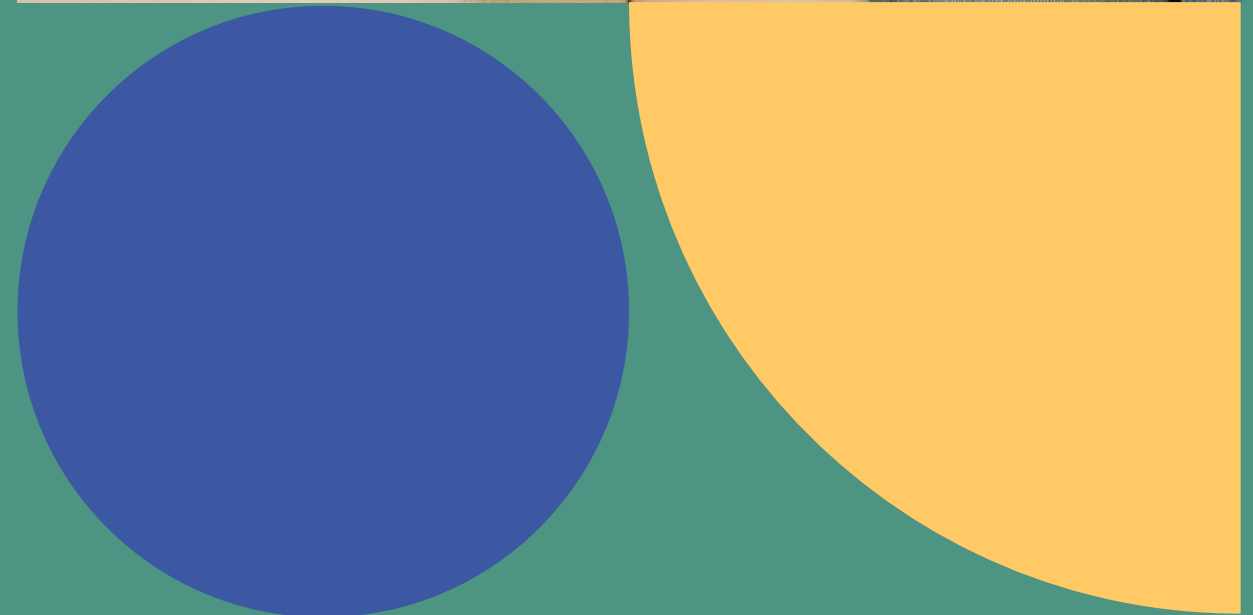
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Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based, early-intervention course that teaches participants about mental health and substance use challenges.

Mental Health First Aid teaches the skills needed to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges, as well as how to provide someone with initial support until they are connected with appropriate professional help.

The early-intervention aspect of the course is crucial.



What do you learn in MHFA?

In the course, you learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies to help someone in both crisis and noncrisis situations, and where to turn for help.

Topics covered include:

- Depression and mood disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Trauma
- Psychosis
- Substance Use Disorders



The Basics

- MHFA is an interactive program that relies on participation.
- This course is not a therapy or support group, but rather it is intended to provide information and build skills.
- Offer in various formats
 - 2 hours of prework, followed by a 6 hour in-person or virtual Instructor Led Session
 - 8 hour in-person course
- Learners who complete the course will receive a certification.



Key Themes in MHFA



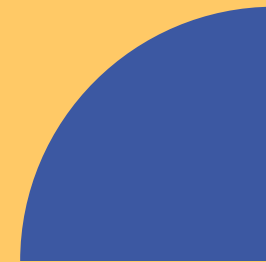
Trauma

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), trauma is an event or series of events that causes physical, emotional, or life-threatening harm to an individual



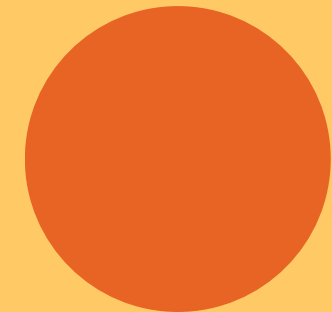
Stigma

Fear and misunderstanding are often referred to as stigma. Stigma involves negative attitudes (prejudice) and negative behaviors (discrimination).



Culture

A combination of a person's values, norms, expectations, and identity that can affect their perceptions, actions, and how they interact with others.



Recovery

Recovery is a personal journey with the goals of hope, empowerment, and autonomy.

Self-care; for others, for yourself.

In the chat, please share your favorite form of self care.

Activities -
exercise, sports,
cooking,
gardening,
reading, etc.

Social time -
spending time
with friends,
family, loved
ones

Community -
Groups,
religious
activities,
recovery groups

Rest -
relaxing, taking
care of your
body, mind, and
soul

Time outside in
nature or your
happy place



Person-first language





PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

Instead of this...

- Mentally ill

- Crazy/insane/disturbed

- Depressed/schizophrenic

- Manic-depressive

- Addict/junkie/druggie

- Alcoholic

- Ex-addict/clean

Try this.

- Person living with a mental health challenge or use the diagnosis if the person prefers that language (e.g., major depressive disorder)

- Person living with a mental health challenge/trauma

- Person living with depression/schizophrenia

- Person living with bipolar disorder

- Person living with a substance use challenge or disorder

- Person living with an alcohol use challenge or disorder

- Person in recovery



LANGUAGE THAT FEEDS STEREOTYPES

Instead of this...

- Mental illness

- Drug/alcohol abuse

- Committed suicide

- Failed suicide

Try this.

- Mental health challenge or crisis

- Substance use challenge

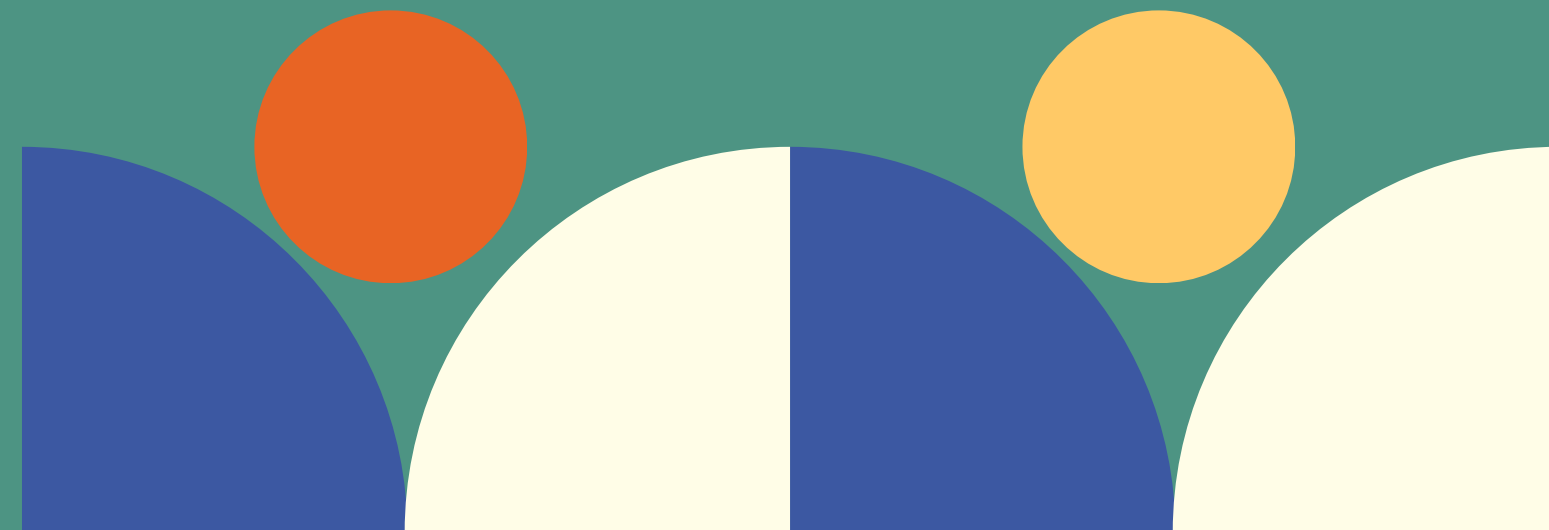
- Died by suicide or lost to suicide

- Attempted suicide

The Impact & Reach

4,088,544

mental health first aiders in the
United States



4,088,544

Total First Aiders

2,226,626

Adult English First Aiders

1,737,092

Youth English First Aiders

23,652

Adult Spanish First Aiders

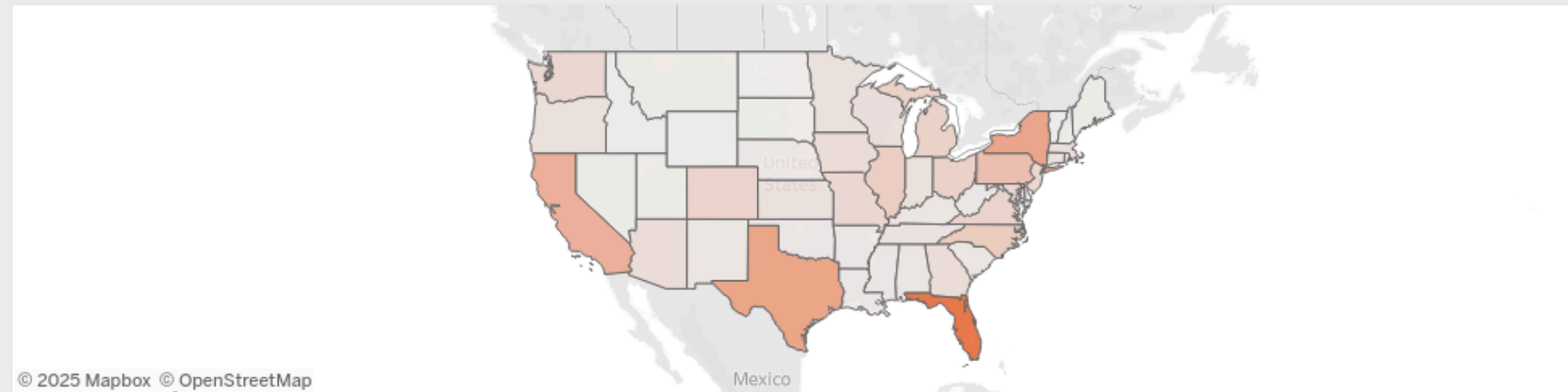
12,956

Youth Spanish First Aiders

Course State

(All)

First Aiders by State and US Territory



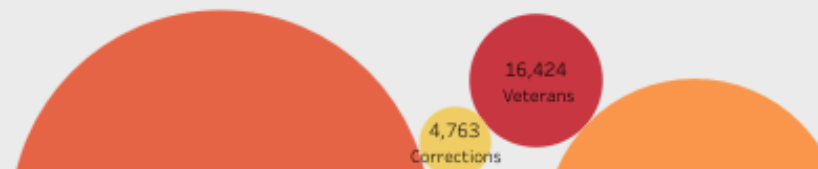
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Total First Aiders

55

518,342

Mental Health First Aid by Certification



Where can I take the MHFA training?

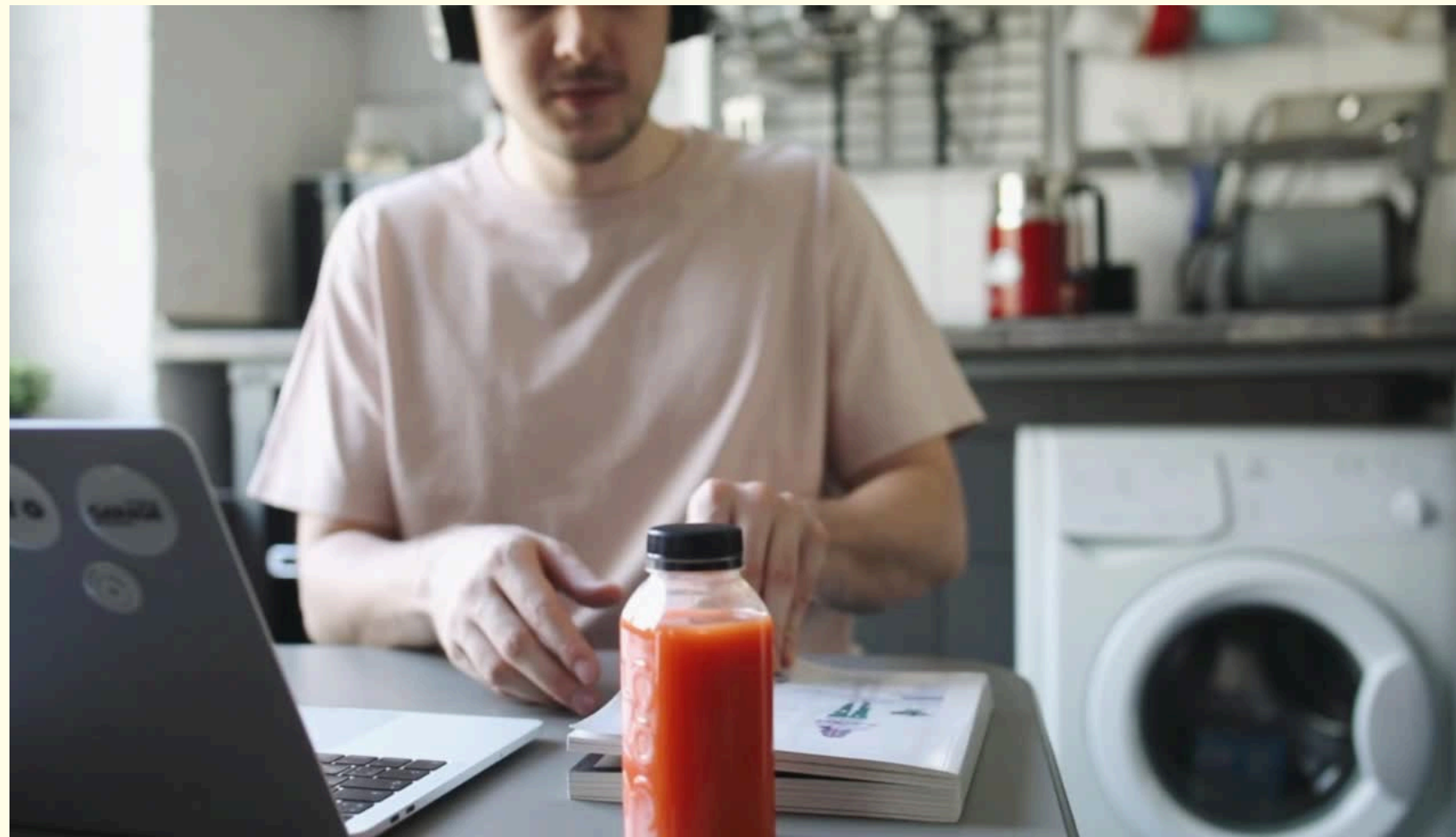
In your community

MHFA has a search function
where you can find a course
near you (or virtually!)

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

With NNLM

Region 4



A Brief Overview

A peek inside the course

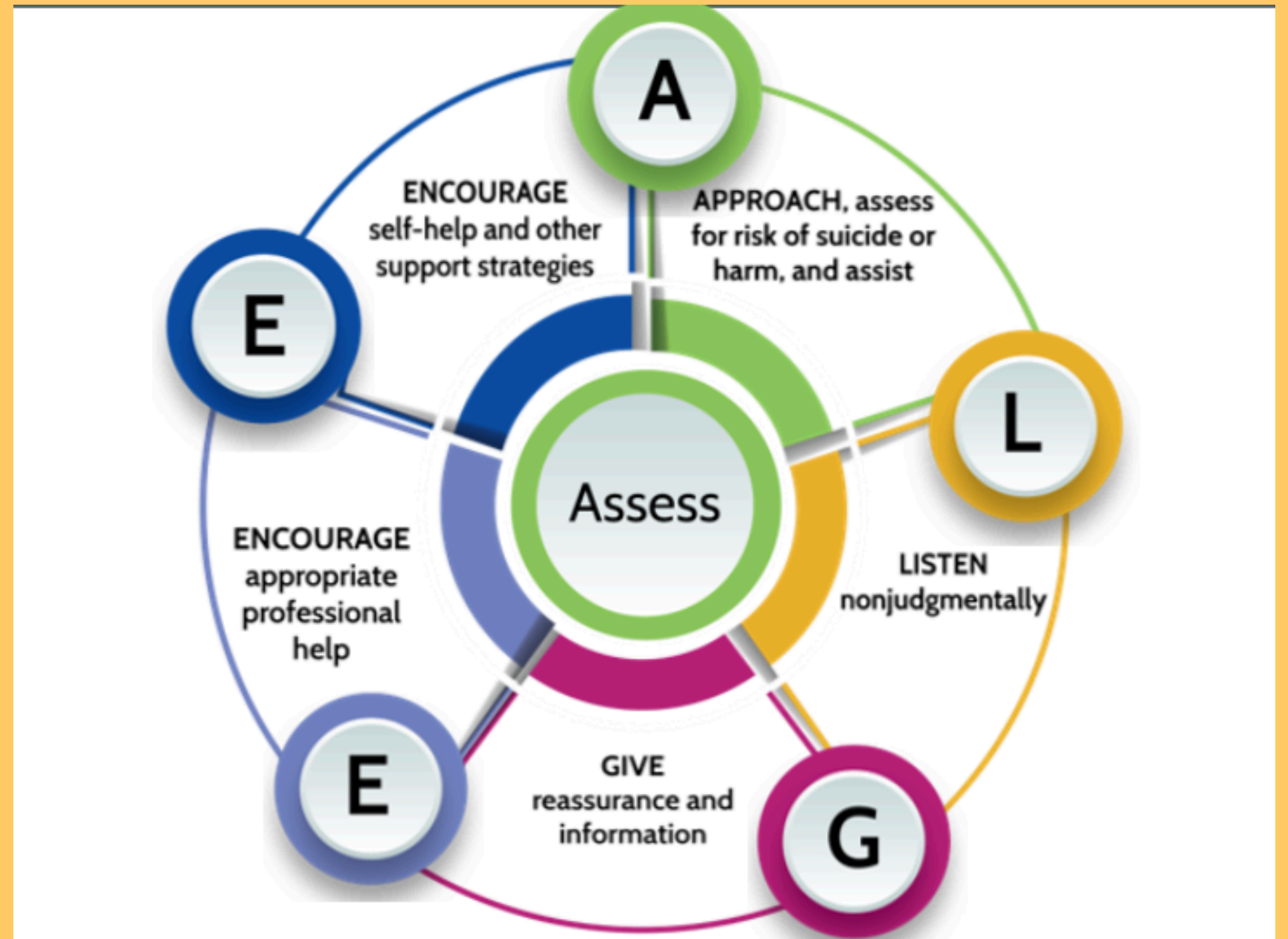
SEGMENT	TOPIC
1	Welcome to Mental Health First Aid
2	MHFA Self-paced Introduction Recap
3	ALGEE: Mental Health First Aid Action Plan
4	MHFA for Early Signs and Symptoms
5	MHFA for Worsening Signs and Symptoms
6	MHFA for Crisis Situations
7	Self-care for the Mental Health First Aider



Breakout rooms, scenarios, group discussions, videos, knowledge checks, and skills-based practice activities are used throughout.

ALGEE Action Plan

- Non-linear
- Continuously reassessing and moving through different stages of the action plan
- Cultural considerations and your relationship to the individual will impact how you approach a situation
- Sometimes, someone else may be better fit to give reassurance and information



Knowledge Check

True or False in the Chat

Reducing stigma is not an important part of being a Mental Health First Aider.

Knowledge Check

True or False in the Chat

Reducing stigma is not an important part of being a Mental Health First Aider.

FALSE

Knowledge Check

True or False in the Chat

Our health beliefs and health behaviors are connected to our culture.

Knowledge Check

True or False in the Chat

Our health beliefs and health behaviors are connected to our culture.

TRUE

Knowledge Check

True or False in the Chat

Recovery is achievable and attainable for people who have experienced a mental health challenge.

Knowledge Check

True or False in the Chat

Recovery is achievable and attainable for people who have experienced a mental health challenge.

TRUE

Recognizing worsening signs and symptoms and knowing when a situation has become a crisis

Constantly reassessing, practice with asking difficult questions to assess the risk for suicide, helping Mental Health First Aiders be able to recognize when professional help is needed and how to get that help





Asking the question.





MYTH OR FACT (please
answer in the chat)



MYTH OR FACT (please
answer in the chat)



Asking a person about
suicide will encourage
the person to attempt
suicide.



MYTH OR FACT (please
answer in the chat)



MYTH

Asking a person about
suicide will encourage the
person to attempt suicide.

The opposite is true. Asking
directly about their suicidal
feelings will often lower
their anxiety level and act as
a deterrent.



MYTH OR FACT (please
answer in the chat)

Suicide occurs in every
socioeconomic group.



MYTH OR FACT (please
answer in the chat)



FACT

Suicide occurs in every
socioeconomic group.

While studies do report
different prevalence rates, it is
important to know it occurs in
every socioeconomic group.



MYTH OR FACT (please
answer in the chat)



Suicide happens without
warning.



MYTH OR FACT (please
answer in the chat)



MYTH

Suicide happens without
warning.

A person who is suicidal
generally gives many clues
and warnings regarding their
suicidal intentions.



Your awareness of the warning signs of suicide can help save a person's life.

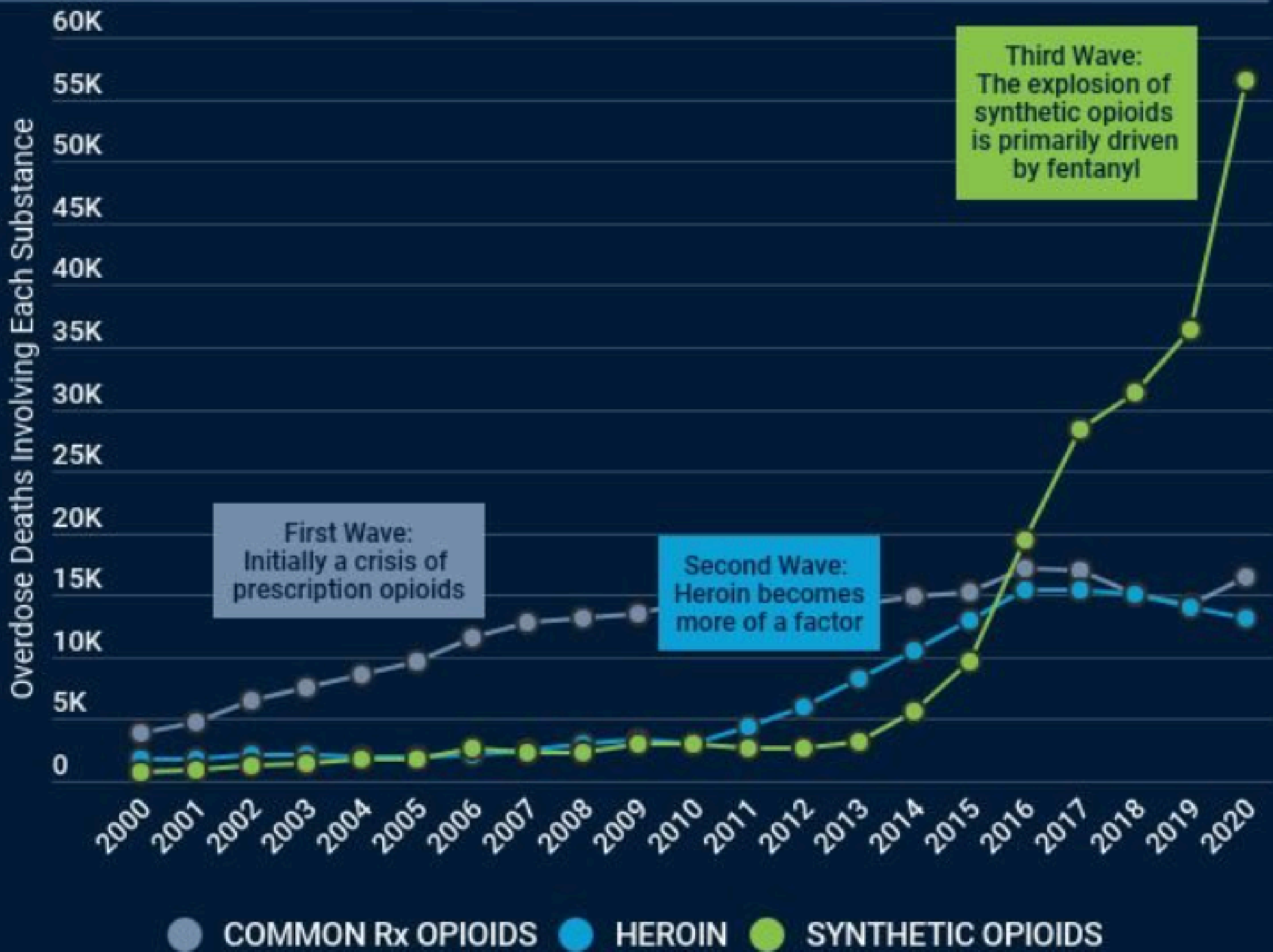


“Learning about 988 through the Mental Health First Aid Curriculum gave me the confidence to call, even when I was unsure if the situation I was in was considered a crisis. I called for help navigating a situation with my father. No one in my family knew what to do, and everyone was fearful to call the police or 911. With the knowledge that I had gained as a Mental Health First Aid along with the assistance from 988 staff members I was able to respond to a crisis situation and help my father get professional help.”

Substance Use Crisis

- In the crisis situation section of the MHFA course, we discuss how to recognize and respond to a substance use crisis.
- The curriculum also briefly discussed Narcan, a life saving opioid overdose reversal drug that is widely available across the U.S.
- Since 2013 we have seen a massive spike in opioid overdose related deaths, largely linked to fentanyl - a synthetic opioid.
- Fentanyl is 50x stronger than heroin and 100x stronger than morphine.





Why is Fentanyl Dangerous?



Mixed into other substances

- Fentanyl is added to powders like cocaine and recreational drugs like ecstasy/MDMA
- Counterfeit pills made to look like prescription medications (Xanax, Adderall, M30s/oxy, Percocet)
- Causes unintentional, accidental poisoning



A small amount can kill

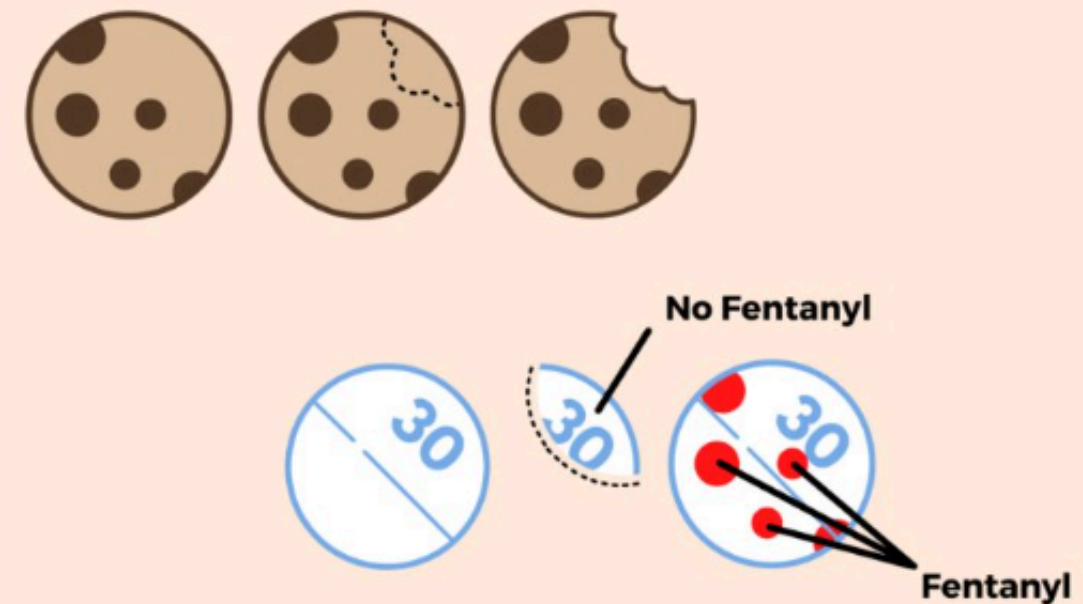
- As little as 2mg (tip of pencil) can be lethal



Chocolate Chip Cookie Effect

- Fentanyl can be unevenly distributed in the pill or powder.
- Even if purchasing from the same person, there can be variability between purchases

The Chocolate Chip Cookie Effect



How Common is Fentanyl?

It is the **most common** drug involved in overdose deaths

According to the U.S Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), nearly **half of all** counterfeit pills tested contained a lethal dose of fentanyl.

Oxycodone

Street names include: 30s,
M30s, oxy, kickers, 40s,
512s, blues



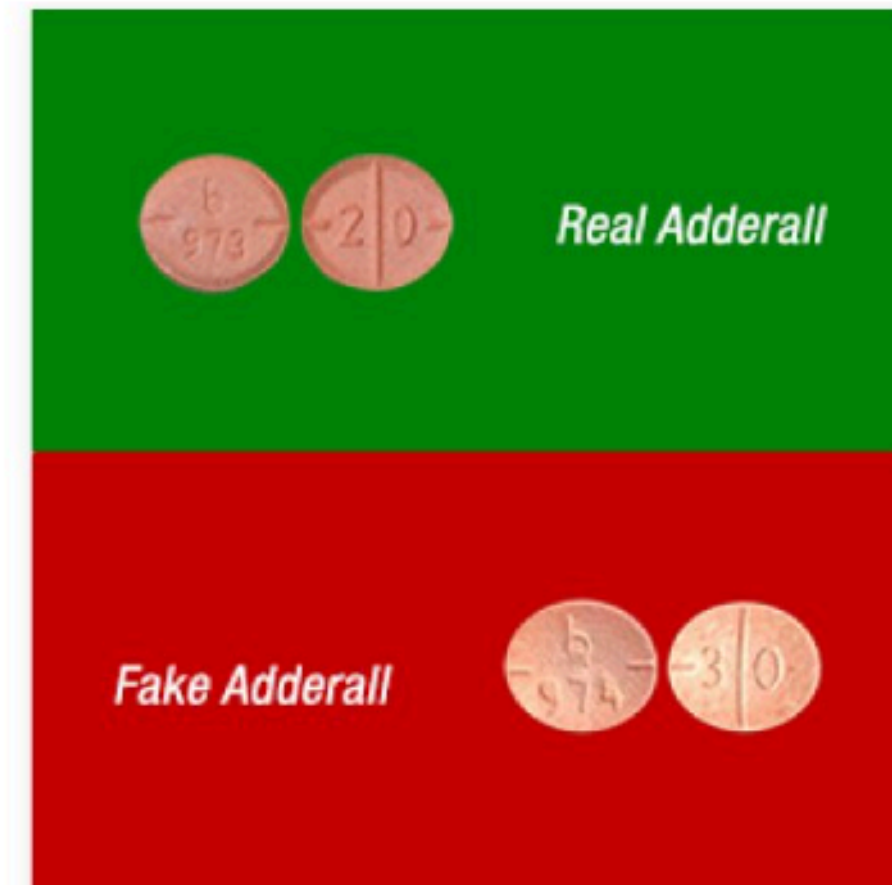
Xanax

Street names include: bars, benzos,
bricks, ladders, sticks,
xanies, zanbars, z-bars



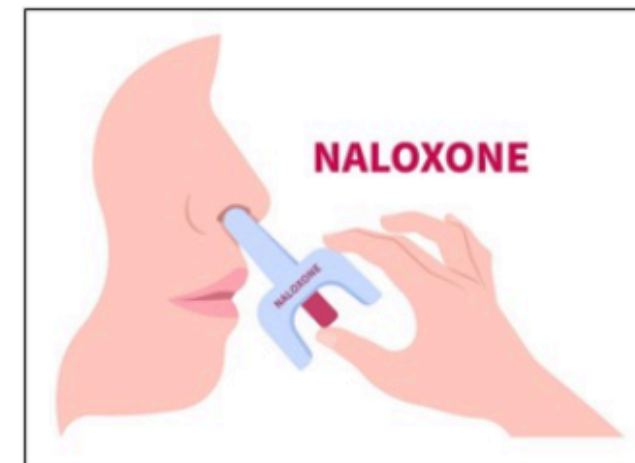
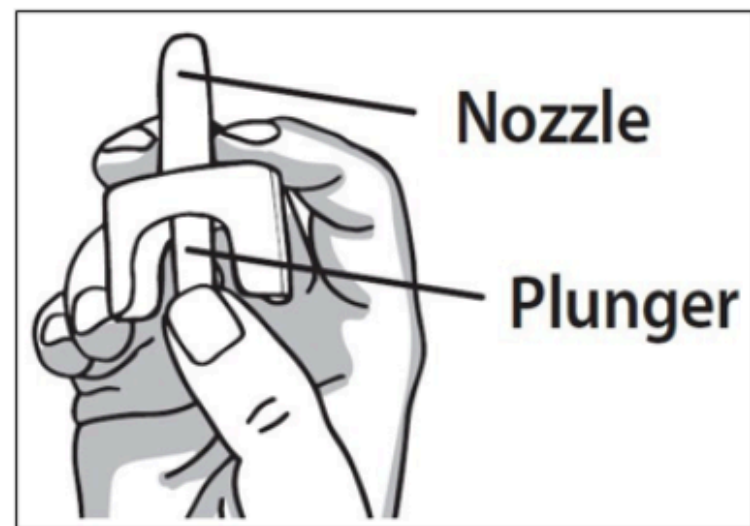
Amphetamine

Prescribed as: Adderall,
Ritalin, Concerta,
Dexedrine, Focalin,
Metadate and Methylin.

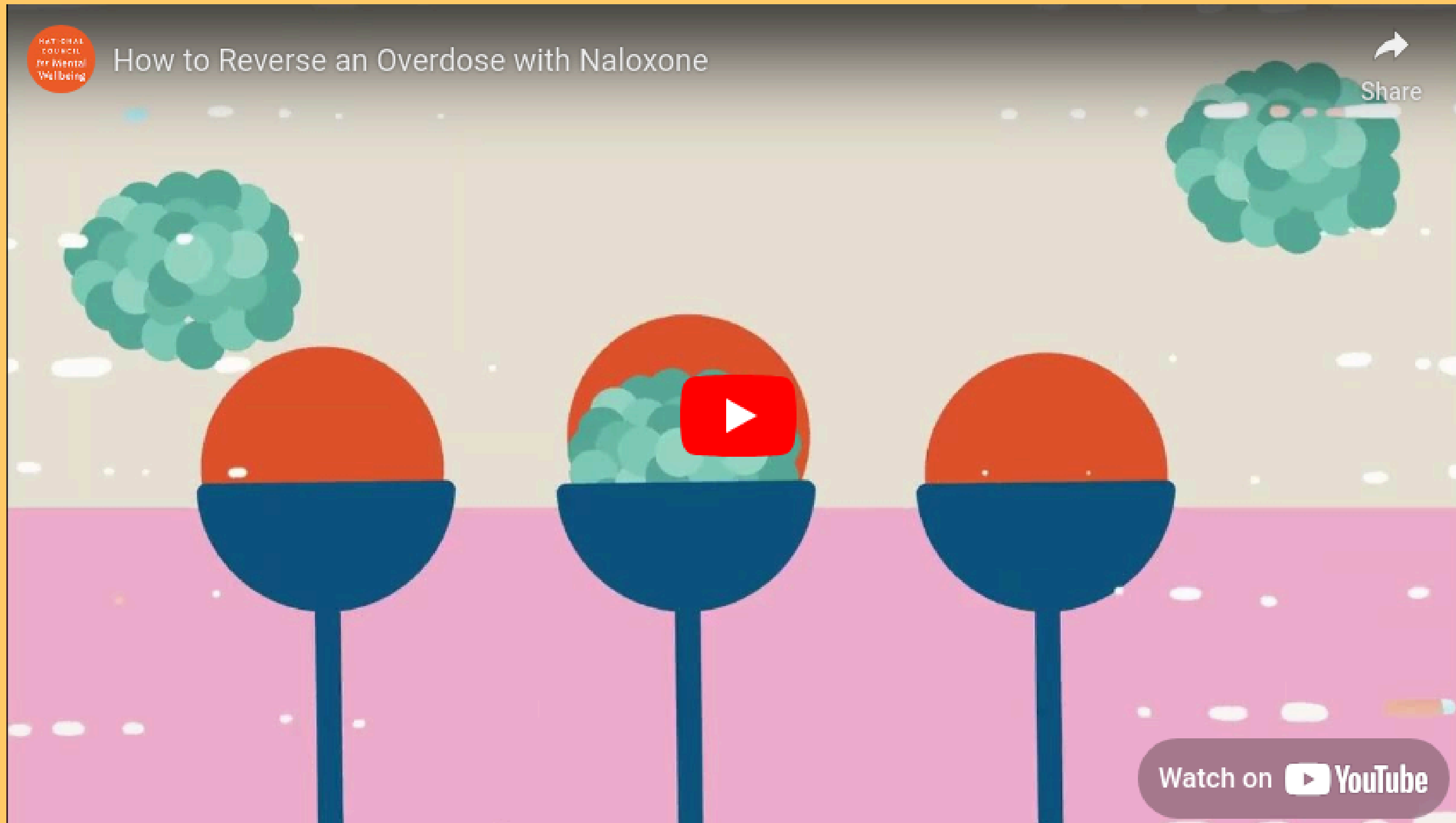


Narcan (Naloxone)

- Completely safe to use and easy to administer
- Non-addictive, highly effective
- May require more than one dose
- Medical assistance is always required after an overdose
- Over the counter Narcan is now available in pharmacies across the U.S and for free from many local public health agencies



Saving a Life with Naloxone



Resources

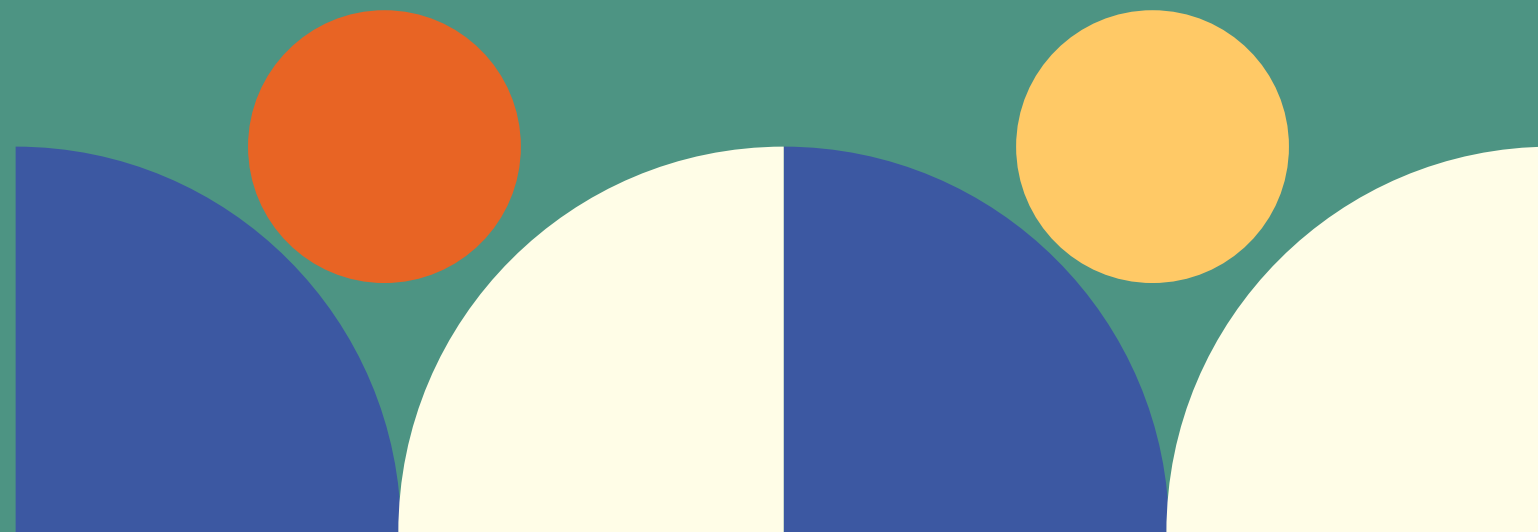
988 - Suicide and Crisis Helpline

Veteran's Crisis Line - Dial 988, then press 1

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration <https://www.samhsa.gov/>

For a comprehensive list of mental health resources, please visit the MHFA Mental Health Resource page: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/mental-health-resources/>

Mental Health First Aid - [mentalhealthfirstaid.org](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)



Q&A





Thank you!

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MHFA

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

References

MHFA General Website - www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org

Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention
<https://pharmacy.cuanschutz.edu/research/research-centers/research-center-cards/center---consortium>

Definitions and statistics adapted from the Adult Mental Health First Aid Curriculum

