

## Mental Health First Aid – Armed Forces

MHFA for the Armed Forces Community is a specially designed project. It provides the basis for increased mental health resilience amongst veterans and the families of both veterans and serving personnel throughout the UK. [SSAFA](#) is delivering the project in a collaborative partnership between themselves, MHFA England CIC, [Combat Stress](#) and the [Royal British Legion](#).

The project aims to train 6,600 Armed Forces Community Mental Health First Aiders in the serving and civilian communities.

### What will you learn?

Our MHFA Armed Forces Community course is split up into 4 manageable chunks:

- What is mental health, and why MHFA for the Armed Forces Community?
- Suicide and depression
- Psychosis
- Anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder

In each section you will learn how to:

- Spot the early signs of a mental health problem
- Feel confident helping someone experiencing a mental health problem
- Provide help on a first aid basis
- Help prevent someone from hurting themselves or others
- Help stop a mental illness from getting worse
- Help someone recover faster
- Guide someone towards the right support
- Reduce the stigma of mental health problems

These topics have been specifically tailored to the armed forces community and their culture.

### How will you learn?

The MHFA AF course takes place over 2 full days. Get in touch if you need a more tailored approach. The sessions will be a mix of presentation, group discussions and group work activities. Our instructors provide a very safe learning environment and are trained to support you throughout the whole course. If you don't feel comfortable joining in certain bits, then don't, we won't make you do something you aren't comfortable with.

Due to some of the sensitive subjects of our courses, including suicide, we limit numbers to 16 people. We want everyone to feel safe and our instructors can help if people find some bits particularly difficult.

You'll receive an MHFA AF Community manual that you can take away with you at the end of the course and also an attendance certificate from MHFA England (this is a national award) to say you are now an Armed Forces Community Mental Health First Aider.

### Who can attend the course?

Anyone who has a connection with the armed forces including:

Veterans

Serving personnel

Family member of Serving or ex-Service personnel

Health and Social Care staff that may be engaging with the Armed Forces Community Charitable Organisations, where staff may be engaging with the Armed Forces Community (including anchor organisations and representing bodies)  
Members of Military / Community Covenant teams  
Members of any organisation that connects with serving or ex serving personnel or their families  
Local and National Government elected representatives, civil servants, employers and HR departments  
LA staff, community planning teams, integrated care teams.  
Education departments and staff at colleges and universities  
Emergency services including police, fire service and ambulance staff.  
Medical professionals, GPs, Nursing and associated professional staff (eg occupational health, health promotions), Administrators and reception / front of house staff  
Court, Law, Custody and detention professionals  
Employers, managers and HR department staff and  
DWP staff, employability organisations, mental health support organisations, disabilities groups

### **How to register for / request a course?**

#### **For individuals:**

You can register your interest by emailing our instructor who will contact you with details of courses coming up including dates, costs and registration instructions

#### **For units / squadrons / departments:**

Contact our instructor with details of your request including numbers you wish trained and any defining or restricting criteria such as staff type, dates, and so on

#### **For organisations:**

Contact our instructor with details of staff and volunteers you wish to include in the training or if you want to find out more about the MHFA AF programme

### **Mental Health First Aid – Armed Forces Instructor for your area:**

Aiveen Ryan is one of only four trained MHFA AF instructors currently covering Scotland (Jan 2014) and is our instructor for your area.

**Just simply email Aiveen at: [change@aiveenryan.com](mailto:change@aiveenryan.com) or ring her on 077 964 963 22**

Aiveen Ryan B.A., M.Sc., Dip CBT, MPNLP, SQHP (GHR Reg.), CPP (CIPD)

A psychology graduate, personal development, thinking and behaviour change consultant and trainer, Aiveen also works for SSAFA in Scotland developing their volunteer projects and her parents, son and brothers all served in the forces.

For more general information about mental health first aid training visit

[www.mhfaengland.org](http://www.mhfaengland.org)

For more information about SSAFA services and help visit

[www.ssafa.org](http://www.ssafa.org)

Mental ill health can affect every single one of us. There is widespread ignorance of mental ill health in the general and military population and there is the associated stigma too. For some the stigma can lead to delays in people seeking help and support. There is also a lack of confidence in what to do if someone is distressed or in a crisis situation.

**By learning to recognise the signs that someone may be unwell, you may be able to provide initial help, to guide a person towards appropriate professional help, and in its most powerful form, save a life by learning basic suicide intervention skills.**