An Introduction To Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid
Aims:

• Introduce participants to Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) programme within the context of the government’s mental health improvement agenda.
What Do You Think Mental Health First Aid is?
Background to SMHFA

• Betty Kitchener and Tony Jorm, Canberra Australia
• Scottish Government Pilot Scotland – 2003
• Adapted for Scottish audience – 2004
• NHS Health Scotland
• First instructors trained – 2005
• Independent review – 2007
• Update of materials – 2008.
Evidence based Course
Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland

Scotland’s Health Improvement Policy 2008 – 11

• Promote and improve mental health
• Prevent mental health problems
• Support a better quality of life.
Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland

• SMHFA is one of many initiatives.
• Others include:
  – See me Campaign
  – Choose Life
  – Breathing Space
  – HeadsUp Scotland
  – Scottish Recovery Network
  – Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives.
What is Mental Health?
What is Mental Health?

- Mental health means our ability to enjoy life and cope with its challenges
- Mental health is not a by-word for 'mental illness'
- ‘A mental illness is a problem that affects mental health (just like a broken leg affects physical health)’.

(Well Scotland)
What is Health?

a state of (complete) physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’
(World Health Organization)
Has a diagnosis of a serious mental health problem but copes with life well and has positive mental health.

No diagnosable mental health problem and positive mental wellbeing

Has a diagnosis of a serious mental health problem but poor mental wellbeing

No diagnosable mental health problem but poor mental wellbeing
Why Scotland’s Mental Health First Aid?

- Mental health problems are common
- There is stigma around mental health problems
- Many people are not well informed about mental health or mental health problems
- Professional help is not always on hand
- People may lack the insight to realise that they need help or that help is available
- The majority of people often do not know how to respond.
Aims of Mental Health First Aid

• To preserve life
• To provide initial help
• To prevent the problem getting worse
• To promote recovery of good mental health
• To provide comfort.
SMFHA Training does not teach people to be therapists. However, it does train people in…

- How to ask about suicide
- How to recognise the signs of mental health problems or distress
- How to provide initial help
- How to guide a person towards appropriate professional help
The aims of Mental Health First Aid are:

• To preserve life
• To provide help to prevent the mental health problem or crisis developing into a more serious state
• To promote the recovery of good mental health
• To provide comfort to a person experiencing distress
• To promote understanding of Mental Health issues
SMHFA Content

12 hour course covers:

- Mental Health; recovery; stigma; inequalities in mental health; drugs and alcohol
- Suicide
- Self harm
- Depression
- Anxiety Disorders
- Psychosis

- All participants receive a participant manual
First Aid For Mental Health

- Ask about suicide
- Listen non-judgementally
- Give reassurance and information
- Encourage the person to get appropriate help
- Encourage self-help strategies
Feedback from Participants

“The quality of the training was first class, the knowledge of the Instructors really came through and the practical exercises were thought provoking and informative”

“This was one of the best training courses I have attended. It has increased my knowledge and confidence to help people experiencing mental health problems”

“I never knew how serious a problem depression could be. Now that I understand it better I hope I will be able to help people experiencing depression”
International Phenomenon

- Australia
- Hong Kong
- Singapore
- Canada
- New Zealand
- Finland
- England
- Wales
Striving for Excellence

- New and updated statistics/ national policy context
- A fresh new look and accessible language
- A full, ongoing, Equality and Diversity impact assessment
- Alignment with the key suicide messages of Choose Life
- Aligned with alcohol brief interventions key messages
- And much, much more….
The SMHFA training Model

National Training Team

Instructors: 270 (10 BSL)
7 days training

Participants: 25,000
(number of participant manuals ordered)
12 hour course
Participants from all walks of life…

- Prison service staff, police, court services
- NHS departments, out of hours services
- Housing departments, Job Centre plus
- Community workers, voluntary sector
- Educational establishments
- Workplace setting, community groups, general public
- Vets, light house staff, BBC, chaplains, banks…
Any Questions ?
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