



Southern Kenai Peninsula Resilience Coalition:

***Cultivating Supportive Adult Relationships with Youth on
the Southern Kenai Peninsula***

**Ingrid Harrald and Anna Meredith,
teen Mental Health First Aid Instructors**



teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA):



- evidence-based program
- teaches teens in grades 10-12, or ages 15-18
- teaches teens how to **identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use** challenges in their friends and peers.
- gives teens **the skills to have supportive conversations** with their friends and **how to get help from a responsible and trusted adult**



2014:
SKPRC
mission
started

2014: Project Aware- DEED (Melissa Linton, Sharon Fishel)

2014-2020: Counselors trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid to train teachers, aides


- Fairbanks, Mat-Su, Juneau, KPBSD
- Eventually more KPBSD Counselors trained in YMHFA
- Project Aware funding ran out, Instructors left KPBSD or shifted positions

2022-2023: SKP has 5 teenMHFA instructors trained and ready to implement



“Poor mental health and suicidal thoughts and behaviors are increasing for nearly all groups of youth.” ([*YRBSS Data Summary and Trends -DASH-CDC*](#))

“1 in 5 U.S. teens will have a mental health challenge by the time they are 18 yrs old” ([*Mental Health First Aid National Council*](#))



“The mental health of our SKP students continues to outpace the availability of current resources in our schools. The recent adoption of comprehensive school counseling programs across our district emphasizes the importance of more intensive tier three services to support the mental health needs of our students. School counselors, who are often best positioned to support our students spend most of their time delivering universal or tier one services for all students leaving little time to address tier three supports that are required to meet the **increasing** mental health needs. Our comprehensive school counseling program also supports collaborative efforts with professionals in the community to help expand the reach of our programs.”

-KPBSD High School Counselor



Studies showed teens who completed the tMFHA course:

- Demonstrated increased mental health literacy.
- Were more confident helping a peer with a mental health problem.
- Viewed seeking help from mental health professionals (e.g., school counselors, therapists) more positively.
- Reported less psychological distress.

tMHFA learning objectives:

- Recognize early warning signs that a friend is developing a mental health or substance use challenge.
- Recognize warning signs that a friend may be experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis.
- Describe how to talk to a friend about mental health and seeking help.
- Explain when and how to get a responsible adult involved.
- Discuss where to find appropriate and helpful resources about mental health challenges and professional help.
- Apply the tMHFA Action Plan to help a friend with a mental health or substance use challenge or crisis.



Our ask of BOE:

- Support KPBSD students by offering tMHFA program
- Support Admin to invite this program into their schools
- Support families and communities by knowing about tMHFA and YMHFA
- Reach out to SKPRC if you have more questions:

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