

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Arizona College Prep High School will conduct Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) training for 11th Grade students beginning January 8, 2025 (see specific dates below). This is an evidence-based training that teaches teens how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges in their friends and peers. The training gives teens the skills they need to have supportive conversations with their friends and emphasizes the importance of getting help from a responsible and trusted adult.

Young people often turn to each other when stressed or upset and try to help, sometimes taking on too much. tMHFA teaches them they don't have to take these problems on alone. The course discusses issues that some teens may find distressing, like school violence and suicide. You may wish to discuss these subjects with your teen before or after the training.

Mental health challenges are very common in adolescents, and this course is not being introduced because of any specific problems at our location. In the event of a suicide here, be aware the specific suicide will not be discussed during the class, nor will any individual teen.

The course is being taught by our school and district staff. All instructors teaching the course have received special training and are certified to teach the course by Mental Health First Aid USA®, a division of the National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

The course will be taught in three 90-minute sessions during your teen's American History class on the following block days: 1/8 and 1/9, 1/15 and 1/16, 1/29 and 1/30. The following is an overview of what will be addressed.

Session 1 (January 8 and 9)
Mental health in general, what mental health challenges are, how common they are in teens. The impact of mental health challenges on teens, how people with mental health challenges can get better, professionals who can help.
Session 2 (January 15 and 16)
Helping a friend who is in crisis because they are suicidal, introducing the tMHFA Action Plan ("Look, Ask, Listen, Help Your Friend") and how it can be used in a crisis situation. A video shows a teen helping a friend who is experiencing suicidal thoughts. Helping a friend who is in another type of crisis, such as threatening violence or harm to others, engaging in nonsuicidal self-injury, or experiencing a traumatic event such as bullying,

abuse or assault. Practice using the tMHFA Action Plan (“Look, Ask, List, Help Your Friend”) in these types of crisis situations.

Session 3 (January 29 and 30)

How to help a friend who may be in crisis due to substance use, how to help when a friend might be developing a mental health challenge. The course does not teach teens how to diagnose! It’s information about being a supportive friend, encouraging friends to seek help, and knowing when it’s time to get someone else involved.
Recovery, resilience and all final activities to complete the tMHFA course.

There are resources for further information below and a parent night so you can follow up with your student on what they are going to be learning. **If you would like to learn more about tMHFA we will be offering a virtual parent informational session on Tuesday, December 17, 2024 from 5:30-6:30pm. The link following will take you to Google Meet presentation: <https://meet.google.com/ypq-nyqb-bws>**

Feel free to reach out to our social worker Eddie Soto with any questions you may have and see the resources below.

If you do not wish for your child to participate in this training, please email our social worker Eddie Soto at Soto.Edward@cusd80.com with your child’s full name.

Sincerely,

Eddie Soto, LMSW

ACPHS School Social Worker

480-424-8718

Soto.Edward@cusd80.com

RESOURCES

Learn more about Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid USA
www.MentalHealthFirstAid.org/

National Helplines

If you or someone you know needs immediate help, call 911.

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Call 988

Visit <https://988lifeline.org/>

Crisis Text Line

Text “MHFA” to 741-741 for free 24/7 crisis counseling.

Visit www.crisistextline.org

Learn more about mental health problems

Teens Health

http://teenshealth.org/teen/your_mind

National Alliance on Mental Illness

www.nami.org/Find-Support/Teens-and-Young-Adults

National Institute of Mental Health

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml>.