Daye Cooper Hagel, M.A., C.C.C.
MHWFA

Updated April 2021
info@mentalhealthwildernessfirstaid.ca

Mental Health Wilderness First Aid - Course Outline

Mental Health Wilderness First Aid courses provide interactive, evidence-based training on recognizing, assessing, and supporting clients who are experiencing a range of mental health conditions in remote areas. Rural communities, wilderness guides, search & rescue members, tree planters, OE teachers, and others living, working, or playing in remote areas have all benefitted from MHWFA. Students are provided with an orientation to mental health conditions and psychoeducation (how the brain works); assessment tools, connection to outside resources, and practical intervention strategies for field use.

Lead Instructor

Donetta Faye (Daye) Cooper Hagel

- M.A. Counselling Psychology, University of Victoria
- M.A. Anthropology, University of Toronto
- Canadian Certified Counsellor (C.C.C.), Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association
- Clinical Counsellor working in remote area mental health
- Level Three Guide and former Executive Director, Sea Kayak Guides Alliance of B.C.
- 15 years / 1500 days of experience as a professional wilderness guide.

Prerequisites

- No specific academic or age prerequisites. A working knowledge of English is required.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

- Identify a range of mental health conditions & the basics of nervous system activation.
- Use a simple step-by-step structure to assess and intervene.
- Assess risk and the importance of differentiating field-manageable mental health symptoms from other conditions.
- "Hold the Space": demonstrate interpersonal skills for supporting mental well-being.
- Utilize specific interventions to support mental health symptoms in the field.
- Access external support resources for themselves and their clients.

Daye Cooper Hagel, M.A., C.C.C.
MHWFA

Updated April 2021

info@mentalhealthwildernessfirstaid.ca

Mental Health Wilderness First Aid – Courses		
Introduction	**Basic** (8 hours)	**Standard** (16 hours)
Introduction to Mental Health in remote areas including: • How the brain works with stress & trauma • Evidence-based mental health treatment overview • Research on the benefits of time in nature	✓ Basic	✓ Intermediate
MHWFA Steps		
Holding Space - Foundational mental health skills **Primary Survey** - Initial assessment & interventions **Secondary survey -** Detailed assessment & planning interventions **External Resources**	✓	✓
Scenarios / Roleplays	✓	✓
Focus Conditions		
Anxiety, stress, panic, mental wellness	✓	✓
Trauma / PTSD Depression and mood disorders Psychosis Grief and Loss Self-Injury Suicidal Ideation		✓
Cost		
Course fee	$195	$380
Low-income sliding scale available (up to 25% off)	✓	✓

Resources & Materials

- MHWFA Key Concepts & Interventions waterproof pocket guide
- Activity handouts
- Certificate of completion
- An optional, illustrated course manual is available for purchase for $35 plus shipping. (PowerPoint slides are not made available).

"One of the best things about this course is, not only do students gain skills to help support clients, they are also better able to be aware of and manage their own mental health experiences in life and in the field."

- James Rodger, Adventure Guide Program Coordinator, Thompson Rivers University

Daye Cooper Hagel, M.A., C.C.C.
MHWFA

Updated April 2021
info@mentalhealthwildernessfirstaid.ca

Logistics & protocol

Exploration of mental health topics can be challenging or triggering for learners. Self-care is emphasized during this course. You are encouraged to let the instructor know ahead of time if you anticipate some of the course material might be personally challenging. You are also encouraged to practice self-care throughout the course and take a personal break when you need to.

In-person courses

- Classes are mostly indoors with some outdoor scenarios. In-person classes will be conducted in accordance with appropriate current local health protocol.
- Please come rested and bring a notebook, pen or pencil, clothing and footwear suitable for outdoor scenarios, a personal face covering as required by local health protocol, and a personal tea mug.
- Participants agree to abide by local health protocols and respect other students and the learning environment. **It is not necessary to come close to others during scenarios.**
- All participants agree to self-monitor, and not to attend class if they develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19. *In this case, a student may receive a credit to attend a MHWFA course within the next 12 months.*

Virtual (Zoom) courses

- Classes are hosted over Zoom (an online videoconference platform). A computer with microphone, speakers, and webcam is necessary. *Smaller screens such as smartphones are not recommended for the class.* Zoom is a user-friendly platform and you do not need much special stuff to attend – however, **you should practice the basics with a friend before your first class**: how to accept a Zoom invitation, mute yourself, switch views, etc.
- Please come rested and bring a notebook, pen or pencil, have hot drinks and snacks readily available for yourself.
- Please **keep your video on** throughout the course (unless you are having bandwidth issues). **Communicate with the instructor if you would like extra support or to chat privately, or are needing to leave early for any reason** – so we don't worry about you.
- **Please bring one or more simple physical distraction tools to the course.** This means anything simple that allows your hands to be physically "busy" while listening or talking. Play-doh, simple colouring materials, knitting, or fidget toys are all good options – please have one at your desk as you attend class. *While this may sound unusual, it is evidenced to assist the brain to process emotional material.*