

Mental Health First Aid Responder at-a-glance

Mental Health First Aid Responders at Purolator

Purolator's mental health strategy aims to:

- increase awareness of mental health through education
- empower early identification and intervention
- provide access to care
- enable our leaders

By training, identifying and empowering employees across the organization to act as Mental Health First Aid Responders, we are taking meaningful action to support these goals.

Many employees have gone through this training already, and we want to build on this. Our goal is to have a trained, designated Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Responder at every Purolator location, with multiple responders in large locations like Hubs and A terminals. The MHFA Responder will be identified to their workplace community and may be called upon to support and intervene when an employee is experiencing a decline in mental health or a mental health crisis.

MHFA Responders will be supported with guidelines and terms of reference for the role, access to a supportive network of peers who are also in the MHFA responder role, opportunities to refresh the content they have learned, and ongoing education opportunities.

Time commitment:

8 hours of training – course is delivered virtually over two half-days

2 hours annually to attend quarterly, 45 minute meetings with fellow MHFA Responders Community of Practice (voluntary, but encouraged)

The role of the Mental Health First Aid Responder

A Mental Health First Aid Responder in the workplace is the go-to person for anyone who is struggling with a mental-health-related issue. The first responder will help guide the person in distress to the relevant help that they need. They will also have the relevant knowledge to spot someone who is struggling with their mental health and therefore can intervene prior to the situation escalating.

The Mental Health First Aid course does not teach people how to be therapists. It does teach people how to:

- recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health problems
- provide initial help

- guide a person toward appropriate professional help

Just as CPR training helps someone with no clinical training or medical background to assist an individual having a medical emergency like a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training helps someone assist an individual experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis.

The goal is to help support an individual until appropriate professional help is identified. In the Mental Health First Aid certification course participants will learn a single-action plan that includes assessing risk, respectfully listening to and supporting the individual in crisis and identifying appropriate professional help and other supports that can be applied in many situations.

Participants are also introduced to risk factors and warning signs for mental health problems. In addition to crisis interventions, participants learn how to have effective conversations about mental health, regardless of whether someone is in crisis or not.

Crisis interventions covered

What types of situations could a Mental Health First Aid Responder be involved in?

Participants are taught how to provide effective crisis intervention in a variety of situations:

- Panic attack
- Suicidal behaviour
- Substance overdose
- Acute stress reaction
- Psychotic episode

A Mental Health First Aid Responder could also be involved in the following:

- Creating a safe and inclusive environment for anyone struggling with a mental health challenge to disclose and seek support
- Regional coaching and support to the business on demystifying mental health stigma and how to recognize signs of symptoms of an individual dealing with a mental health challenge
- Proactively reaching out to someone who may be struggling
- Employee and Family Assistance (EFAP) advocate and champion

Mental Health First Aid Responders must be aware that the training and practical application covers some sensitive subjects that some individuals may find difficult. Mental Health First Aid Responders must be comfortable to provide support and assistance in potential crisis intervention situations.