



Canyon Independent School District

Dr. Darryl Flusche
Superintendent

Canyon High School

Jennifer Boren
Principal



January 6, 2020

Dear Parents,

During this semester, your child will participate in teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA). This program was designed to raise mental health awareness among teens, while also addressing the issue of mental health stigma. Our school is so excited to be bringing this program to our students this year.

tMHFA is currently being evaluated by a team of researchers at Johns Hopkins University. We would like to invite all students who participate in the training to take part in three anonymous online surveys to measure the effectiveness of this program.

After your permission is granted, our school will organize in-school time for students to take the online surveys. Your child will receive a link to take the online survey at the email address that you provide on the consent form.

Please review and complete the online consent form located at <https://mrprbcw.hosts.jhmi.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=EELA9A3NME>. The link is also available on the CHS website located under the Student Life tab.

We have enclosed an informational sheet as well. If you have any questions about the surveys or tMHFA, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or the Student and Family Advocate Team at 677-2453.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Boren
Canyon High School Principal
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Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) Research Overview

This expanded pilot study, which will be evaluating the tMHFA program, is a partnership between the faculty in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH) and the National Council for Behavioral Health. The program has been developed and implemented broadly in Australia. It was adapted by the National Council with consultation from three expert panels and our research team for implementation in American high schools. This protocol involves piloting the program in 35 high schools.

Aims of the Study

The aim of this pilot study is to evaluate the tMHFA program by:

- Establishing the feasibility of delivering the tMHFA program to American adolescents by assessing the time it takes for schools to implement and implementers' assessments of fit, acceptability, and preliminary impact
- Qualitatively assess whether tMHFA is effective in engaging young people and contains useful material
- Quantify changes in adolescents' knowledge of the general warning signs that a mental illness may be developing, awareness of appropriate sources of help, development of skills and confidence in providing mental health first aid to a peer

Study Design and Procedures

tMHFA involves delivery of 3 x 75-minute (or 4 x 60-minute or 5 x 45-minute) training sessions to students in grades 10-12. tMHFA builds on the familiar first aid model and teaches students an easy to use and remember 5-step action plan for helping a friend with a mental health problem.

The program is designed to develop students' knowledge and skills in:

- Recognizing warning signs that a friend is developing a mental health problem
- Understanding how to talk to a friend about mental health and seeking help
- When and how to tell a responsible adult
- Where to find appropriate and helpful resources about mental illness and professional help
- How to respond in a crisis situation

To track how students' knowledge of mental illness change over time, the National Council contracted the JHSPH research team (i.e., Drs. Wilcox, Pas, and Murray) to administer research measures and evaluate outcomes. The students under 18 years of age with parent/caregiver consent who provide assent AND students 18 or older who consent will be asked to complete questionnaires at three time points: before the program is presented, after the teaching session/s, and approximately 6 months after the training.

The participants will receive via email the online pre-test, post-test, and follow-up assessment. We estimate the pre-, post- and follow-up surveys will take about 30 minutes each and will be conducted on REDCap. If students do not have an email address, the paper version of the survey will be available; students will submit into a folder (i.e., they will not hand it to school personnel)



and the site coordinator will mail all surveys directly to the JHSPH researchers.

Direct and Social Benefits

Schools who agree to host the tMHFA training evaluation will receive free training courses for students (tMHFA), staff and parents/guardians (YMHFA), irrespective of whether these individuals consent to participate in the evaluation. By attending training course, participants will be taught a range of skills for assisting young people with emerging mental health problems or mental health crises and will receive a printed manual/student workbook and a certificate of participation.

The information participants provide in the surveys will assist in developing a training package of the highest possible quality. If found to be effective, the training package will be used by the tMHFA program in the future. Participation in this pilot and evaluation will therefore benefit future pupils of tMHFA. In addition, this project has the potential to lead to better community support for adolescents who are developing or experiencing a mental health problem, by providing guidance to friends, family or school staff who care for them.

Sharing of Study Data and Results

No schools or students will be identified by name to protect the identities of all participating students in any publications or dissemination. Individual students' responses will not be shared with the school or others not associated with this research.

All results from the questionnaires will be published in the form of group percentages and not individual responses. The findings of this research will be published in scientific journals, on MHFA's website (www.mhfa.com.au), and in training materials. Results may also be presented and discussed at local, national and international conferences on youth mental health, or mental health first aid. An easy to understand infographic outlining findings will also be sent to the school for circulation among students, staff and parents, at the end of the evaluation.