

An Introduction To Scotland's Mental Health First Aid



Aims:

- Introduce participants to Scotland's Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) programme within the context of the government's mental health improvement agenda.

What Do You Think Mental Health First Aid is ?



Background to SMHFA

- Betty Kitchener and Tony Jorm, Canberra Australia
- Scottish Government Pilot Scotland – 2003
- Adapted for Scottish audience – 2004
- NHS Health Scotland
- First instructors trained – 2005
- Independent review – 2007
- Update of materials – 2008.



Evidence based Course

Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland

Scotland's Health Improvement Policy 2008 – 11

- Promote and improve mental health
- Prevent mental health problems
- Support a better quality of life.

Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland

- SMHFA is one of many initiatives.
- Others include:
 - See me Campaign
 - Choose Life
 - Breathing Space
 - HeadsUp Scotland
 - Scottish Recovery Network
 - Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives.

What is Mental Health?



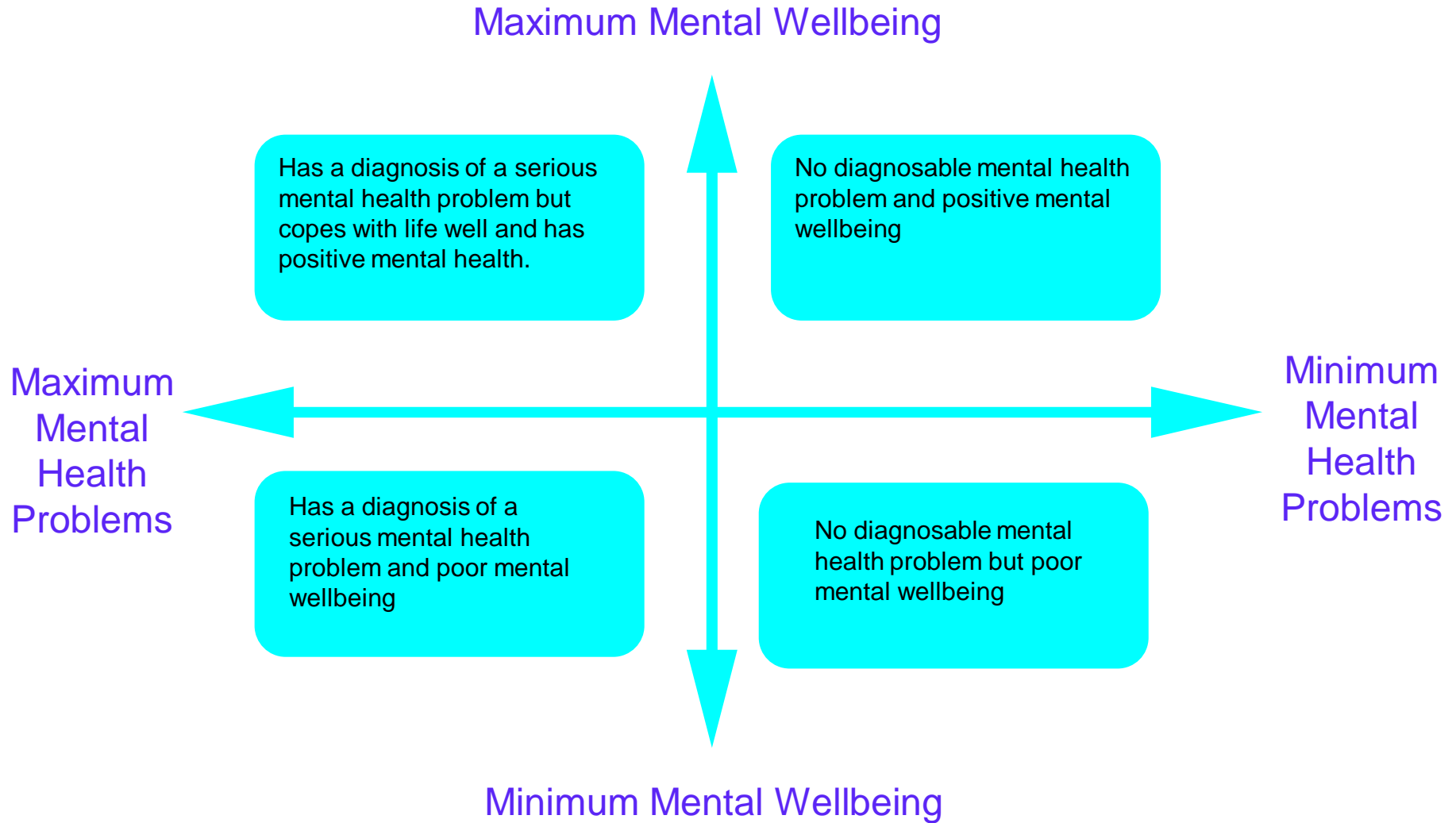
What is Mental Health?

- Mental health means our ability to enjoy life and cope with its challenges
- Mental health is not a by-word for 'mental illness'
- 'A mental illness is a problem that affects mental health (just like a broken leg affects physical health)'.
(Well Scotland)

What is Health?

a state of (complete) physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.'

(World Health Organization)



Why Scotland's Mental Health First Aid?

- Mental health problems are common
- There is stigma around mental health problems
- Many people are not well informed about mental health or mental health problems
- Professional help is not always on hand
- People may lack the insight to realise that they need help or that help is available
- The majority of people often do not know how to respond.

Aims of Mental Health First Aid

- To preserve life
- To provide initial help
- To prevent the problem getting worse
- To promote recovery of good mental health
- To provide comfort.

SMFHA Training does not teach people to be therapists. However, it does train people in...

- How to ask about suicide
- How to recognise the signs of mental health problems or distress
- How to provide initial help
- How to guide a person towards appropriate professional help

The aims of Mental Health First Aid are:

- To preserve life
- To provide help to prevent the mental health problem or crisis developing into a more serious state
- To promote the recovery of good mental health
- To provide comfort to a person experiencing distress
- To promote understanding of Mental Health issues

SMHFA Content

12 hour course covers:

- Mental Health; recovery; stigma; inequalities in mental health; drugs and alcohol
 - Suicide
 - Self harm
 - Depression
 - Anxiety Disorders
 - Psychosis
-
- All participants receive a participant manual

First Aid For Mental Health

- **A**sk about suicide
- **L**isten non-judgementally
- **G**ive reassurance and information
- **E**ncourage the person to get appropriate help
- **E**ncourage self-help strategies

Feedback from Participants

“ The quality of the training was first class, the knowledge of the Instructors really came through and the practical exercises were thought provoking and informative”

“ This was one of the best training courses I have attended. It has increased my knowledge and confidence to help people experiencing mental health problems”

“I never knew how serious a problem depression could be. Now that I understand it better I hope I will be able to help people experiencing depression”

International Phenomenon

- Australia
- Hong Kong
- Singapore
- Canada
- New Zealand
- Finland
- England
- Wales



Striving for Excellence

- New and updated statistics/ national policy context
- A fresh new look and accessible language
- A full, ongoing, Equality and Diversity impact assessment
- Alignment with the key suicide messages of Choose Life
- Aligned with alcohol brief interventions key messages
- And much, much more.....

The SMHFA training Model



Participants from all walks of life...

- Prison service staff, police, court services
- NHS departments, out of hours services
- Housing departments, Job Centre plus
- Community workers, voluntary sector
- Educational establishments
- Workplace setting, community groups, general public
- Vets, light house staff, BBC, chaplains, banks...

Any Questions ?



Sandy MacLean
Advisor-Access
Scotland's Colleges

sandy.maclean@scotlandscolleges.ac.uk

0131 313 7525