

TRAINER HANDBOOK

MHFA Combined Course

Aligned to PUARCV001, CHCMHS001, CHCCCS019, CHCCCS003

For Trainers, Assessors & Facilitators

WELCOME TRAINER

This handbook provides everything you need to deliver the MHFA Combined Course safely, consistently, and in compliance with RTO standards.

It includes:

- Delivery guidance
- Session plans
- Safety protocols
- Assessment instructions
- Trainer responsibilities
- Cultural safety guidelines
- Trauma-informed facilitation practices

This handbook works alongside:

- Trainer Guide / Session Plan
- Assessment Tools
- TAS
- Student Handbook

1. TRAINER ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

As a trainer, you must:

1.1 Deliver training safely

- Use trauma-informed practice
- Monitor learner wellbeing
- Provide trigger warnings
- Allow breaks when needed
- Create a culturally safe environment

1.2 Ensure assessment integrity

- Follow marking guides
- Use observation checklists
- Provide fair, consistent judgments
- Offer reasonable adjustments

1.3 Maintain professionalism

- Respect confidentiality
- Avoid giving personal opinions
- Maintain boundaries
- Model calm, empathetic communication

1.4 Support learners

- Provide LLN support
- Offer emotional support referrals
- Encourage participation without pressure

2. TRAINER QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

Trainers must hold:

- **TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training & Assessment** (or equivalent)
- **Relevant mental health qualifications**
- **Industry experience** in crisis response, mental health, or community services
- **Trauma-informed facilitation skills**
- **Cultural competency**

Assessors must meet ASQA requirements.

3. DELIVERY PRINCIPLES

3.1 Trauma-Informed Delivery

- Avoid graphic details
- Provide content warnings
- Allow learners to step out anytime
- Debrief after sensitive activities

3.2 Cultural Safety

- Avoid assumptions
- Use inclusive language
- Respect cultural expressions of distress
- Offer interpreter or cultural support options

3.3 Psychological Safety

- Encourage respectful dialogue
- Manage dominant voices
- Protect quieter learners
- Intervene early if conflict arises

4. SESSION DELIVERY GUIDELINES

Below is a summary of how each session should be delivered.

SESSION 1 — Welcome & Foundations

- Establish group agreements
- Introduce trauma-informed approach
- Explain course structure

Trainer Tip: Use warm, inclusive language to set the tone.

SESSION 2 — Understanding Mental Health

- Present continuum
- Facilitate stigma discussion

Trainer Tip: Validate all perspectives without judgment.

SESSION 3 — Psychological First Aid

- Demonstrate LOOK–LISTEN–LINK
- Model grounding techniques

Trainer Tip: Use real-world examples without graphic detail.

SESSION 4 — Recognising Mental Health Problems

- Explore early warning signs
- Discuss cultural differences

Trainer Tip: Encourage learners to share experiences safely.

SESSION 5 — Crisis Recognition & Response

- Teach de-escalation
- Run crisis simulations

Trainer Tip: Monitor emotional reactions closely.

SESSION 6 — Suicide Safety

- Teach direct questioning
- Run guided role-plays

Trainer Tip: This is the most sensitive session — slow down, check in often.

SESSION 7 — Supporting Recovery

- Explore strengths-based practice
- Encourage autonomy

SESSION 8 — Cultural Safety

- Discuss cultural norms
- Explore communication differences

SESSION 9 — Legal & Ethical Responsibilities

- Duty of care
- Confidentiality limits
- Mandatory reporting

SESSION 10 — Self-Care for Helpers

- Discuss burnout
- Create self-care plans

SESSION 11 — Practice Scenarios

- Facilitate role-plays
- Provide structured feedback

SESSION 12 — Knowledge Checks

- Run quiz
- Clarify misunderstandings

SESSION 13 — Assessments

- Conduct simulations
- Use observation checklists
- Provide feedback

SESSION 14 — Completion

- Summarise learning
- Issue certificates (if applicable)

5. ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE FOR TRAINERS

5.1 Before Assessment

- Explain assessment tasks clearly
- Check for LLN or support needs
- Provide reasonable adjustments

5.2 During Assessment

- Use observation checklists
- Do not assist learners during performance
- Maintain a calm, supportive environment

5.3 After Assessment

- Provide clear feedback
- Offer re-assessment if needed
- Document outcomes accurately

6. SAFETY PROTOCOLS

6.1 Emotional Safety

If a learner becomes distressed:

- Pause the activity
- Offer a break
- Provide a quiet space
- Check in privately
- Refer to support if needed

6.2 Crisis Response During Training

If a real crisis occurs:

- Ensure safety
- Follow critical incident policy
- Contact emergency services if required

- Document the incident

★ 7. MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS

Common Challenges & Trainer Strategies

Challenge	Trainer Response
Dominant learner	Redirect gently, invite others
Quiet learner	Encourage without pressure
Emotional overwhelm	Offer break, grounding
Cultural misunderstanding	Clarify respectfully
Conflict	Intervene early, reset boundaries

★ 8. TRAINER COMMUNICATION STYLE

Trainers must model:

- Calm tone
- Non-judgmental language
- Active listening
- Empathy
- Respect for autonomy
- Cultural humility

Avoid:

- Giving personal opinions
- Diagnosing mental illness
- Minimising distress
- Using jargon

★ 9. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Trainers must complete:

- Attendance records
- Assessment cover sheets
- Observation checklists
- Feedback forms
- Incident reports (if needed)

- Critical incident forms (if needed)

All documents must be stored securely.

10. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Trainers must:

- Collect learner feedback
- Participate in moderation
- Attend validation meetings
- Update industry currency annually

11. TRAINER SELF-CARE

Delivering mental health training can be emotionally demanding.

Trainers should:

- Debrief with colleagues
- Take breaks
- Maintain boundaries
- Seek supervision if needed
- Use grounding techniques

Your wellbeing matters.