



Supporting Youth Mental Health

Insights from a 2025 qualitative study of Youth Mental Health First Aid training participants in Forsyth County, NC

How community members are using YMHFA training in real-life settings

Study Overview

A short follow-up questionnaire was sent to 83 past **Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA)** training participants in 2025 to understand how the training is being used in **day-to-day life**. Thirteen trainees responded, sharing what has been helpful and where additional support may be needed.

How Participants Used the Training

Participants described using YMHFA skills at work, at home, and in their communities. Examples included:

- **Checking in** with youth who seemed distressed or withdrawn.
- **Talking** with youth about stress, self-harm, or school challenges.
- **Approaching** difficult conversations with more patience, calm, and care.
- **Noticing** signs of stress or distress earlier.
- **Listening** longer and without judgment.
- **Feeling** more intentional and aware during everyday interactions.

Helping Youth Get Connected

Several participants shared that they **connected young people to additional supports**, including school counselors, therapists, psychiatrists, Family Services, community programs, LGBTQ+ youth groups, and hotlines. Others said they felt prepared to make referrals but had not yet encountered a situation where they needed to do so.



"I try to listen longer and not rush to solutions. The training helped me slow down and be more present."



Challenges Participants Experienced

Participants also named barriers that made it hard to apply the training, including:

- Stigma around mental health.
- Limited access to services or long wait times.
- Transportation or cost barriers for families.
- Uncertainty about what qualifies as a crisis.
- Feeling overwhelmed in high-stress moments.

Some participants shared that they had not yet encountered a situation that required using the training.



What These Responses Show

Overall, participants reported that Youth Mental Health First Aid helped them feel more prepared, more aware, and more confident when supporting youth. They also identified ongoing challenges that affect how and when the training can be used, highlighting the importance of continued support and strengthened community resources.