



## **The Process of Adapting the MHFA Australia Program for another Country**

Over the last four years, the MHFA Australia Program has been adapted and rolled out in a number of countries. The first was Scotland, followed by Hong Kong, then the province of Alberta in Canada and lastly Singapore. England is about to join this list. In Finland, the MHFA manual has been translated by the Finnish Association for Mental Health. In Sri Lanka the MHFA manual has been culturally adapted by the National Council for Mental Health, NCMH (Sahanaya),

### **What is the process to bring the MHFA Australia Program to another country?**

For overseas adaptations of the MHFA Program, our general principle is to work in partnership with any organization that can support MHFA locally and to fit around their needs. The overseas organisation that requests the MHFA Australia Program needs to have the capacity to adapt the MHFA materials for their country and to roll it out across their country. In Scotland, the course has been adapted by the national health system (NHS Health Scotland), as part of the work of the Scottish Executive's national program for Improving Mental Health and Well-being. In Hong Kong it has been taken up by the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong. In Canada, the Alberta Mental Health Board received state funding to train 22 MHFA Instructors, modify, pilot and roll-out the MHFA Program for Canada. The National University of Singapore secured money from a local charity. MIND, the large mental health charity in England has received funding to bring the MHFA Program to England.

Two Trainers of Instructors from the MHFA Australia Program travel to the overseas organisation to deliver the 5-day MHFA Instructor Training Program to a class of 10-20 trainees. The trainee Instructors are chosen by the overseas organisation to be potentially exceptional MHFA Instructors as they are the ones who may help to adapt the MHFA course for their country and also some may become the future Trainers Instructors in their country.

The overseas organisation adapts the MHFA course, manual content and teaching materials to make them relevant to the culture, mental health statistics and mental health resources in its country. When the adapted materials are ready, a Trainer from the MHFA Australia Program is then brought back over to help that organisation organise / conduct its first MHFA Instructor Training course.

Any MHFA Instructor trained by the MHFA Australia Program remains on the MHFA Australia Instructor emailing list to receive our MHFA Newsletter (<http://www.mhfa.com.au/newsletters.htm>) and any updates with relevant mental health research and information about change to content of the MHFA curriculum.

### **Is there a licensing fee?**

We do not sell a licence to an organisation in another country wishing to roll out the MHFA course. Instead, we have a Memorandum of Understanding that both programs sign, to facilitate the ongoing sharing of MHFA teaching materials as each country develops them. [http://www.mhfa.com.au/documents/MHFA\\_MoU\\_for\\_other\\_countries.pdf](http://www.mhfa.com.au/documents/MHFA_MoU_for_other_countries.pdf).

**What costs are involved?** Each trainee MHFA Instructor pays AUD\$3,000 for the training. A minimum of 10 suitable applicants would need to train as MHFA Instructors to bring the MHFA program to an overseas organisation. Also, the organisation would need to fund the return travel & accommodation expenses of the two Trainers of Instructors from Melbourne, Australia, the fee to post the MHFA Instructor Training kits overseas and a consultancy fee of AUD\$120 per hour for any work provided by a MHFA Australia Trainer outside the hours of the 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday Instructor Training course.

### **What is the training model in Australia?**

In Australia, all MHFA Instructors are trained by two Trainers of Instructors in a class of 11-22 trainees. We have now trained over 500 Instructors here in Australia. Anyone wishing to apply to be trained as a MHFA Instructor needs to make a successful application to meet seven selection criteria. If successful, the applicant pays AUD\$3,000 and undertakes the 5-day MHFA Instructor Training Course which is conducted in various parts of Australia. If trainees pass this course, they must sign an Instructor Acknowledgement to become an accredited MHFA Instructor able to deliver the 12-hour MHFA course.

<http://www.mhfa.com.au/documents/InstructorAcknowledgement.pdf>

They cannot train other MHFA Instructors. The MHFA Australia program does not employ the Instructors. Each Instructor has the autonomy to organise, conduct and set their own fee for the delivery of the 12 hour MHFA courses. Instructors can advertise their courses on the MHFA website at this URL: [http://www.mhfa.com.au/current\\_courses.htm](http://www.mhfa.com.au/current_courses.htm) They purchase a MHFA course manual and certificate for each of their course participants from the MHFA Australia Program.

MHFA Australia conducts an annual 2-day Refresher course for all MHFA Instructors. To remain accredited, each Australian MHFA Instructor must try to attend this annually and at least once every three years. They must also successfully teach at least 3 MHFA courses annually and post in the satisfactory responses from class participants that they receive on a standard MHFA feedback form.

### **What does it cost to implement the MHFA Program?**

In terms of the cost of implementing the program, we can tell you about the initial grants we received to get the MHFA Program going in Australia. In 2000 we received \$AUD100, 000 from the territory government and then in 2002 another \$100,000. This did not cover the full costs, so there was quite a bit of unpaid work that went into it. These grants were supposed to cover the development of the course curriculum and teaching materials (slides, manual), its delivery free to the over 1,000 members of the community for an initial period and the training of 12 other MHFA Instructors. The initial uncontrolled evaluation also came out of these grants. In addition we received a donation from a member of the public for \$AUD20, 000 which covered the publication of the manual (graphic design, layout and 5,000 free copies). The 2 randomized controlled trials were covered by research grants. For example, the trial with members of the public in a rural area was covered by a grant of \$AUD178, 000.

### **Why is the MHFA course attractive to funding agencies?**

One of the attractions of the MHFA Program to funding agencies is that it may not require on-going funding once the initial work is done. Individuals and organizations are prepared to pay to do the course, just as they are for regular first aid courses. We currently work with local organizations which can sustain the course in their area. We train the MHFA Instructors for them and then they run the course locally by getting their own funding. Some organizations run

it on a fee-for-service basis, while others (e.g. local health areas) have made it part of their mental health outreach activities and fund the course from their budgets. There are also some places of employment that fund an instructor to be trained and then provide courses to employees. There are also some individuals who pay for their own Instructor training and operate as a private business.

The MHFA Program is a course that is well supported by good research showing its efficacy <http://www.mhfa.com.au/evaluation.htm>. This is what distinguishes the MHFA course from many other courses where effectiveness is often not established.

MHFA Australia has developed the MHFA Program and remains passionate about keeping it as evidence based and best practice as possible. MHFA Australia is currently working on a research project, using the Delphi method, to establish international guidelines for MHFA. We aim to establish consensus of opinion amongst a team of mental health experts (clinicians, mental health service users and carers) across many English speaking countries (Australia, Canada, UK & Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, USA). We anticipate these MHFA guidelines to be ready by end of 2007. It may well mean we have to rewrite some of the content of the MHFA manual and what we teach in the 12 hour MHFA course.

#### **Has the MHFA Program been adapted for different groups within Australia?**

In 2004, with an Australian Government grant, the course was culturally adapted and translated for three culturally and linguistically diverse groups: Vietnamese, Italian and Croatian people living in Australia. Instructors have been trained for each of these language groups. A version for Aboriginal Australians is currently being developed. Currently, there are three Aboriginal instructors who are using the standard course. However, we are aiming to train a much larger number to run the adapted course. The Australian Government may provide some seeding funding as a response to the problem of suicide in Aboriginal communities.

In 2006 a Youth MHFA version is under development. The MHFA Program is being adapted for workers and supporters of adolescents such as teachers, families and youth workers. We have been successful in receiving a research grant to conduct a randomised controlled trial of this new course in early 2007. One of the state education departments is very interested in having all teachers trained in this version of the MHFA Program.

Also in 2006, an e-learning version of the 12 hour MHFA course has been developed with funding from an Australian Government Department of Employment and Work Place Relations to be used by employees in the workplace.

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