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Mental health first aid training for Chile and Argentina

Submission date 30/03/2025	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[X] Prospectively registered [X] Protocol [_] Statistical analysis plan [_] Results [_] Individual participant data [X] Record updated in last year
Registration date 01/04/2025	**Overall study status** Completed	
Last Edited 17/02/2026	**Condition category** Other	

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Many people who meet the criteria for a mental disorder do not receive appropriate professional help. Improving professional help-seeking is likely to require improvements in mental health literacy as well as structural reform of services. Given the high likelihood of contact with a person with a common mental health problem, interventions that teach members of the public to provide early help towards a person developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis may play a role in improving access to services, social support, and mental health outcomes. Mental health first aid is the help offered to a person developing a mental health problem, or experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or in a mental health crisis; the first aid is given until appropriate professional help is received or until the crisis resolves. This course, and related programs, have been developed by Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) International, a not-for-profit organisation that has disseminated the courses to organisations in over 25 other (mostly high-income) countries, which then facilitate the training and accreditation of instructors in those countries. However, MHFA trials have only been conducted in high-income countries. The appropriateness of the training for countries with less well-resourced mental health systems and cultural differences relevant to mental health is unknown. The current study will evaluate the effectiveness of culturally adapted MHFA Training for Chile and Argentina. It will be a collaboration between four partner organisations: the University of Melbourne, MHFA International, University of Chile and Proyecto Suma (Argentina).

Who can participate?

All participants (adults aged 18 years old and over) in each of the study settings in accordance with the criteria.

What does the study involve?

The study will be conducted in 6 settings in each of Chile and Argentina, two universities, two health services, two workplaces or two community settings. Each setting will comprise a pair of clusters and one of each pair will be randomly allocated to the intervention (the MHFA Training for Chile and Argentina) or the wait- list control group, with a 1:1 allocation.

Participants will be asked to complete questionnaires at baseline (T1) and 1 month (T2) and 7 months after baseline (T3). Participants in the control group will be asked to complete

questionnaires at corresponding times. The primary outcome will be intended support towards someone experiencing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis. Secondary outcome measures will include recognition of depression in a vignette; recognition of psychosis in a vignette, beliefs about the helpfulness of interventions for these mental health problems; helping actions taken; confidence in providing mental health first aid; stigmatising attitudes; and desire for social distance from a person with these mental health problems.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
Possible benefits include improved mental health literacy and capacity to help a person developing mental health problems or in a mental health crisis. Risks may include distress related to discussing poor mental health.

Where is the study run from?
University of Chile (Chile) and Proyecto Suma (Argentina)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
April 2025 to June 2026

Who is funding the study?
The National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia)

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

Type(s)
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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
GNT1142395

Study information

Scientific Title
Mental health first aid training for Chile and Argentina: a cluster randomised controlled trial

Acronym
MHFA Chile Argentina

Study objectives
The study hypothesis is that Mental health first aid (MHFA) training in Chile and Argentina will be more effective than no intervention (wait-list control) in improving participant intentions to help someone developing a mental health problem or in a mental health crisis; helping actions taken to assist a person in this situation; confidence in providing mental health first aid; stigmatising attitudes; desire for social distance from a person with a mental health problem.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
1. Approved 17/10/2024, University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (The University of Melbourne, Office of Research Ethics andIntegrity, Research, Innovation & Commercialisation, Level 5, Alan Gilbert Building, 161 Barry Street, Carlton, 3010, Australia; +61 38344 7895; HumanEthics-Enquiries@unimelb.edu.au), ref: 2024-30813-59250-3

2. Approved 03/01/2025, Comité de Ética de la Investigación, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Chile (Avda.Capitán Ignacio Carrera Pinto 1045, Ñuñoa, Santiago de Chile, 7800284, Chile; +56 22 9772443; comite.etica@facso.cl), ref: 74-89/2024

3. Approved 08/11/2024, Comité de Ética en Investigación Proyecto SUMA (Proyecto Suma, Güemes 4130, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, Argentina, Buenos Aires, 1425, Argentina; +54 11 4831 9946; ceiproyectosuma@gmail.com), ref: 14006

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Randomized waitlist control study

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Mental health literacy, stigma

Interventions
Mental health first aid (MHFA) training for Chile and Argentina is a major adaptation based on the Australian Standard MHFA 12-hour course. Course adaptation was undertaken members of the University of Chile and Proyecto Suma (Argentina) research team. As with the Australian MHFA materials, the MHFA Chile and Argentina course includes an MHFA Chile and Argentina manual, instructor teaching notes, PowerPoint slides, videos and activities that allow participants to practice their new skills. The content of the MHFA Chile and Argentina manual was informed by guidelines developed in five Delphi expert consensus studies, undertaken in Chile and Argentina with health professionals, people with lived experience and carers. The results of these studies outline culturally-appropriate actions to betaken to help a person developing depression, psychosis, problem drinking, at risk of suicide or at risk from a potentially traumatic event. Using these guidelines, the team came up with a simplified MHFA Action Plan, more suitable for countries that do not have good mental health literacy and good pathways to mental health care. The new Action Plan is: Recognise, Engage, Keep safe, and Support. The manual was organized into chapters covering each of these actions. Based on this manual, the teaching and curriculum notes were developed. The resulting English-language manual, teaching materials and PowerPoint slides were translated into Spanish. Subtitles for three of the Australian MHFA videos were also translated. The course will be delivered over 2 days and will be conducted in educational institutions, health services, workplaces or community settings by instructors from Proyecto Suma and University of Chile. Training will be offered to approximately 20 participants per course group through face-to-face delivery.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Intentions to provide mental health first aid measured using the Mental health support scale – Intended (Spanish version) at baseline (T1), after course completion (T2) and 6 months after course completion (T3).

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Recognition of depression in a vignette at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later
2. Beliefs about appropriate interventions for a person with depression measured using a Spanish adaptation of a 16-item scale used in a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trial in Australia, at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
3. Confidence in providing MHFA for a person with depression measured by asking participants to rate how confident they would feel supporting this person, at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
4. Desire for social distance from a person with depression measured using the Link Social Distance Scale at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
5. Personally stigmatising attitudes about a person with depression, measured using the Depression Stigma Scale at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
6. Recognition of psychosis in a vignette at at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
7. Beliefs about appropriate interventions for a person with psychosis measured using a Spanish adaptation of a 16-item scale used in a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trial in Australia, at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
8. Confidence in providing MHFA for a person with psychosis measured by asking participants to rate how confident they would feel supporting this person at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
9. Desire for social distance from a person with psychosis measured using the Link Social Distance Scale at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
10. Personally stigmatising attitudes about a person with psychosis, measured using the Depression Stigma Scale at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
4. Helping actions taken to assist a person with a mental health problem measured using the MHSS-Provided subscale Spanish version at baseline, after course completion and 6 months later.
7. Course quality and satisfaction measured using a 5-item questionnaire after course completion.

Completion date
01/06/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
Adults aged 18 years old and over

Participant type(s)
Employee, Healthy volunteer, Learner/student

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
18 Years

Upper age limit
110 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
0

Key exclusion criteria
1. Previously completed an MHFA course
2. Low level of literacy (below middle school)
3. A high level of mental health knowledge based on their professional role (e.g., psychologists and psychiatrists)

Date of first enrolment
15/04/2025

Date of final enrolment
15/11/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Argentina

Chile

Study participating centre
Universidad de Chile, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales
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Study participating centre
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Sponsor information

Organisation
The University of Melbourne

ROR
https://ror.org/01ej9dk98

Funder(s)

Funder type
Government

Funder Name
National Health and Medical Research Council

Alternative Name(s)
National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Government, NHMRC National Health and Medical Research Council, NHMRC

Funding Body Type
Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype
National government

Location
Australia

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study will be available on request from Prof Nicola Reavley(nreavley@unimelb.edu.au). The type of data that will be shared is de-identified data stored in a repository. These data will be availablesubsequent to any publications and for up to 15 years. Consent from participants was required and obtained on the Plain Language Statement.A unique identifier for each participant will be generated, allowing

data linkage across time points. The research team will keep a separate, secure record matching participants' personal information with their unique identifiers. No ethical or legal restrictions have been identified.

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol article		12/02/2026	17/02/2026	Yes	No
Participant information sheet	version 1	01/08/2024	01/04/2025	No	Yes