

# Promoting Mental Health Among Medical Students: The Role of Mental Health First Aid Training in U.S. Medical Education

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## Introduction

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) empowers participants to recognize and provide first aid to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis <sup>1</sup>
- Despite the prevalence of mental health illnesses,<sup>2,3</sup> little evidence exists on the value of MHFA training for medical students
- **Purpose:** To examine the value of MHFA training for medical students in the United States

## Methods

- 2018-2020: Youth MHFA courses were hosted for 63 self-selected medical students at Rush University
- 2019: Adult MHFA courses were provided for 159 first-year medical students at Stritch School of Medicine
- Participants completed post-training surveys, providing course feedback via 5-point Likert scale rankings
- Means and standard deviations were calculated, with means compared using a t-test
- Percentage of 5/5 rankings were compared to  $\leq 4/5$

## Results

**95%**

stated MHFA training was  
**“helpful and informative”**

- Course rankings of adult and youth MHFA were not statistically different (Table 1)
- There was a higher frequency of  $\leq 4$  rankings for confidence applying skills, as opposed to rankings of the course itself (Figures 1-3)

Table 1: Post-Training Student Evaluations\*<sup>1</sup>

	Total	Youth MHFA	Adult MHFA
Course objectives met	4.61	4.68	4.58
Confidence recognizing signs	4.50	4.52	4.50
Confidence offering mental health first aid	4.55	4.68	4.50

\* Means calculated from rankings on 5-point Likert scale.

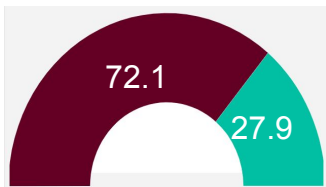
<sup>1</sup> All relationships  $p > 0.05$

## Discussion

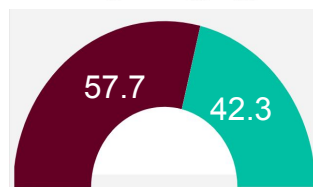
- This suggests MHFA is a valuable resource for educating participants on how to recognize and provide mental health first aid
- Our data depicts overall positive course feedback from medical student participants
- Collectively, this work **provides insight into the value of MHFA training for medical students in the United States**
- Further research should focus on how to maximize confidence in applying skills gained through integrated mental health training.

## Figures 1-3

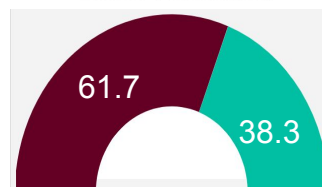
Course Objectives



Recognizing Signs



Offer First Aid



• 5/5 • Less than 5/5

## Acknowledgements

Illinois Academy of Family Physicians (IAFP) and Center for Community Health Equity for their investment in the MHFA trainings.

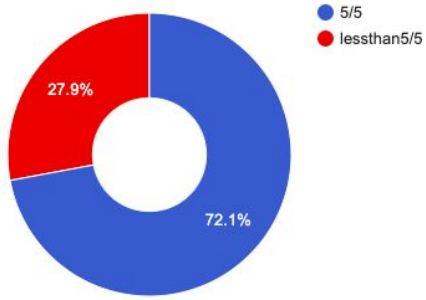
## Presentation Video

[Click for Video](#)

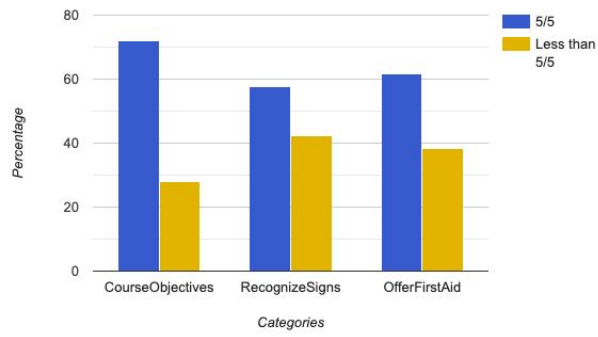
## References

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2. Rotenstein, L. S., Ramos, M. A., Torre, M., Segal, J. B., Peluso, M. J., Guille, C., Sen, S., & Mata, D. A. (2016). Prevalence of Depression, Depressive Symptoms, and Suicidal Ideation Among Medical Students: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *JAMA*, 216(21), 2214-2236. Doi: 10.1001/jama.2016.17324
3. Panchal, N., Kamal, R., Cox, C., & Garfield, R. (2021, February 2021). *The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use*. Kaiser Family Foundation. <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/>

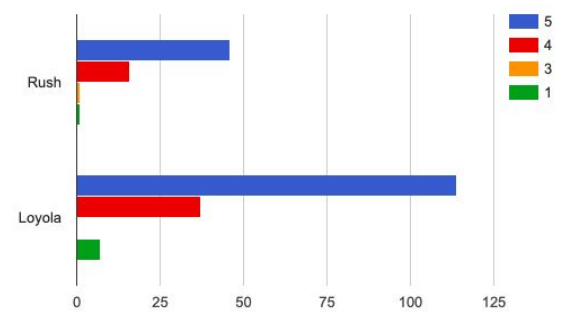
Course Objectives Rankings



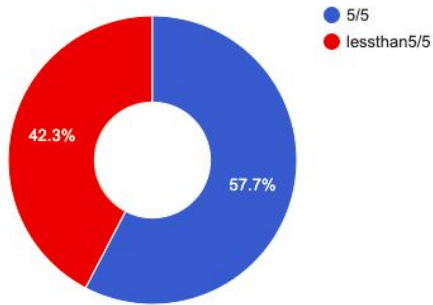
Evaluation Rankings



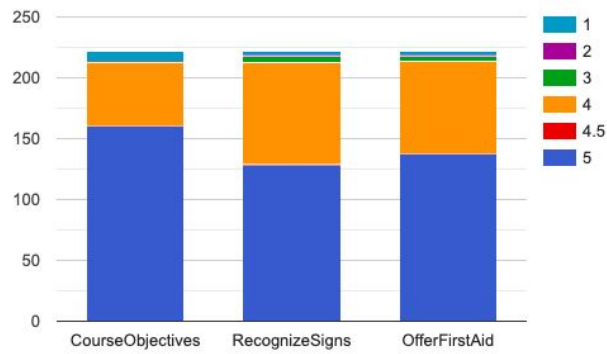
Course Objective Rankings



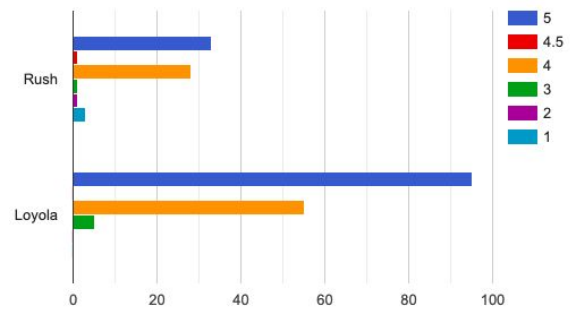
Recognizing Signs Rankings



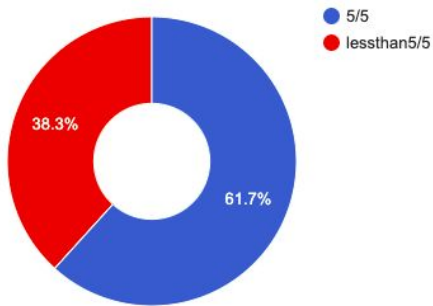
Evaluation Rankings



Comfort in Recognizing Signs Rankings



Offer First Aid Rankings



Comfort in Offering First Aid Rankings

