Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy Assessment Tool (MHAA-AT)

Ty B. Aller[1], Elizabeth B. Fauth[2], Joshua R. Novak[3], & Sarah Schwartz[4]

[1]Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice, Utah State University
[2]Department of Human Development and Family Science, Utah State University
[3]Department of Human Development and Family Science, Auburn University
[4]Department of Psychology, Utah State University

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The Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy Assessment Tool l (MHAA-AT) consists of three types of items: 1) declarative knowledge items (30 items); 2) self-efficacy items (20 items); and 3) behavior items (15 items). These items are then divided into the three micro-processes that define mental health literacy: a) identifying mental health issues; b) locating evidence-based resources; and c) responding to mental health issues (see Figure 1 below). The items and corresponding sections are detailed below:

Figure 1. *Process-Based Model of Mental Health Awareness and Advocacy*
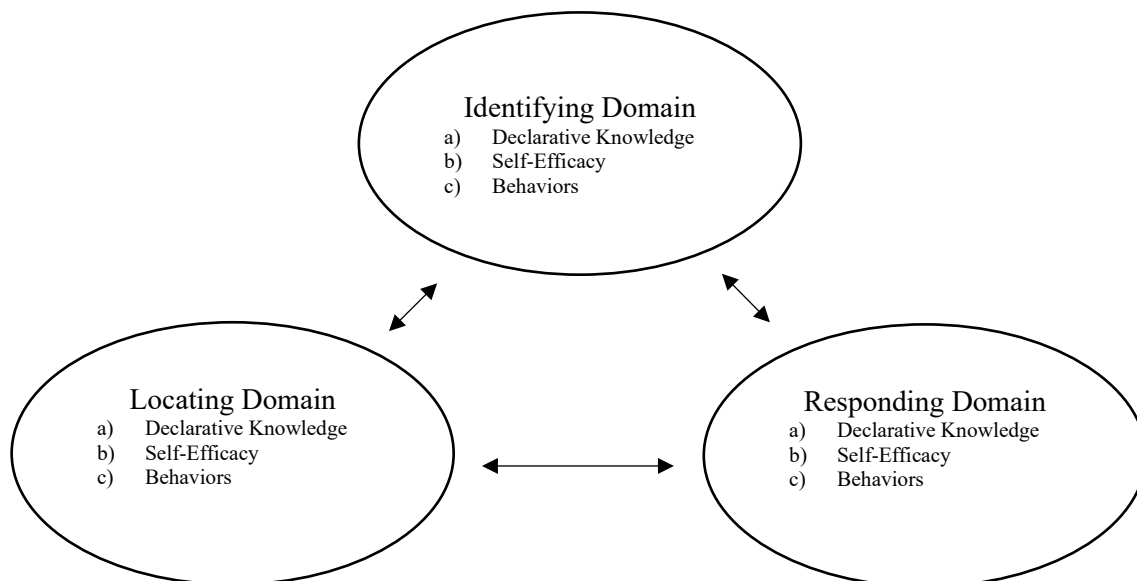
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Item Breakdown and Scoring

Declarative Knowledge Items: Original IRT analyses support using the three below subscales that are separated by three unique content areas (i.e., identifying, locating, and responding).

Identifying Mental Health Issues: Item 1-10. Total score of 10. **Locating Evidence-Based Resources:** Item 11-20. Total score of 10. **Responding to Mental Health Issues:** Item 21-30. Total score of 10.

Self-Efficacy Items: Item 1-20. Total score of 120, converted to average score on each item. Factor analyses of the self-efficacy items suggest a single factor and ergo the items are grouped together. There are, however, questions that address each of the three previously mentioned domains (i.e., identifying, locating, and responding).

Identifying Mental Health Issues: Item 1-7. Total score of 42, converted to average score on each item. **Locating Evidence-Based Resources:** Item 8-14 Total score of 42, converted to average score on each item. **Responding to Mental Health Issues:** Item 15-20. Total score of 36, converted to average score on each item.

Behavior Items: Item 1-15. Total score of 90. Factor analyses of the behavior items suggest a single factor and ergo the items are grouped together. There are, however, questions that address each of the three previously mentioned domains (i.e., identifying, locating, and responding).

Identifying Mental Health Issues: Item 1-5. Total score of 30, converted to average score on each item. **Locating Evidence-Based Resources:** Item 6-10. Total score of 30, converted to average score on each item. **Responding to Mental Health Issues:** Item 11-15. Total score of 30, converted to average score on each item.

Declarative Knowledge Items (Bold designates correct response).

The following section will ask you questions about your understanding of issues regarding mental health awareness and advocacy. Please select the response that most accurately reflects your current understanding of the question. If you do not know the answer, please select "I don't know the answer" rather than guessing.

1. All the following symptoms can be part of the diagnosis for Major Depressive Disorder EXCEPT for which one of the following?

a) Depressed mood most of the day
b) Diminished interest in regular activities
c) Inability to fall asleep, daily
d) Difficulty in controlling worry
e) I don't know the answer

2. All the following symptoms can be part of the diagnosis for Major Depressive Disorder EXCEPT for which one of the following?

a) Feeling keyed up or on edge
b) Feelings of worthlessness
c) Significant weight loss or gain
d) Recurrent thoughts of death
e) I don't know the answer

3. Individuals are more likely to experience symptoms of depression when they are between the ages of:

a) 6-17 years old
b) 18-29 years old
c) 30-41 years old
d) 41-52 years old
e) I don't know the answer

4. Francis shows a lack of interest in school, consistent laziness, and is regularly procrastinating his homework assignments. These behaviors are most likely indicators of what mental health issue:

a) Major Depressive Disorder
b) Agoraphobia
c) Bipolar Disorder
d) Borderline Personality Disorder
e) I don't know the answer

5. According to research on Major Depressive Disorder (MDD), which statement is most true?

a) Men are more likely to experience MDD
b) Women are more likely to experience MDD
c) Men and women are equally likely to experience MDD
d) There is no research about this difference
e) I don't know the answer

6. Which of the following regions has higher proportions of people experiencing Generalized Anxiety Disorder?

a) Europe
b) Asia
c) Latin America
d) Africa
e) I don't know the answer

7. All the following symptoms can be part of the diagnosis for Generalized Anxiety Disorder EXCEPT for which one of the following?

a) Diminished interest in regular activities
b) Difficulty in controlling worry
c) Excessive anxiety and worry
d) Muscle tension
e) I don't know the answer

8. All the following symptoms can be part of the diagnosis for Generalized Anxiety Disorder EXCEPT for which one of the following?

a) Sleep disturbance
b) Feeling keyed up or on edge
c) Easily fatigued
d) Feelings of worthlessness
e) I don't know the answer

9. Sage tells you that she often experiences her hands shaking, often is sweaty, and says she is 'always worried about everything.' If she is diagnosed with a mental health disorder, which of the following best fits her symptoms?

a) Major Depressive Disorder
b) Generalized Anxiety Disorder
c) Panic Disorder
d) Bipolar Disorder
e) I don't know the answer

10. According to research on Generalized Anxiety Disorder, which statement is *most* true about the age at which the disorder occurs?

a) The disorder is most likely to occur before the age of 12
b) The disorder is equally likely to occur at all ages, with the exception of infancy
c) The disorder is most likely to occur before puberty
d) The disorder is most likely to occur around the age of 30
e) I don't know the answer

11. Which of the following mental health providers cannot prescribe medications to treat mental health issues in any of the 50 United States?

a) Licensed Clinical Social Worker
b) Psychiatrist
c) Psychologist
d) Family Practice Doctor
e) I don't know the answer

12. All the following treatments have been supported by research as effective treatments for Generalized Anxiety Disorder EXCEPT:

a) Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
b) Acceptance Commitment Therapy
c) Rebirthing Therapy
d) Psychopharmacological (medication) treatment
e) I don't know the answer

13. Which of the following has been identified by research as being the most effective treatment for severe Major Depressive Disorder?

a) Talk therapy
b) Self-help books
c) Herbal supplements
d) Exercise
e) I don't know the answer

14. Which of the following mental health providers CANNOT provide talk therapy as a treatment?

a) Clinical Social Worker
b) Marriage and Family Therapist
c) Licensed Practical Nurse
d) Psychologist
e) I don't know the answer

15. Which of the following organizations does not provide community resources to help prevent suicide?

a) American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
b) National Alliance on Mental Illness
c) World Health Organization
d) National Organization for Women
e) I don't know the answer

16. According to research, one of the biggest factors keeping college students from seeking treatment for a mental health issue is:

a) Not having a supportive friend to help seek treatment
b) Not knowing their issues is severe enough for treatment
c) Not knowing where to get help for their issue
d) Not having the financial resources to pay for treatment
e) I don't know the answer

17. All of the following are examples of effective ways to combat stigma except:

a) Mass media campaigns
b) Educational courses
c) Public policy
d) All of these are examples of effective strategies
e) I don't know the answer

18. Which of the following is the most accurate about insurance companies and mental health treatments?

a) Insurance companies always pay for all costs of mental health services
b) Insurance companies typically pay for a percentage of mental health services
c) Insurance companies never pay for mental health services
d) Insurance companies have not begun to discuss mental health service coverage
e) I don't know the answer

19. John says to his friend that his mom is crazy because she often stays in bed all day and has to go to therapy every week. Which response provided below would be the most effective at helping decrease the negative stigma of mental health issues expressed by John?

a) "Wow, crazy seems kind of harsh. At least she is getting help for her issues."
b) "Oh, my gosh. I had no idea your mom had a problem like that. How sad!"
c) "It seems like your mom may really struggle with a serious condition. Have you ever thought how hard that would be for her to handle?"
d) "I don't even know how you handle it, John!"
e) I don't know the answer

20. Anne tells you that she is looking for someone to help her manage her medications and receive talk therapy. Who is the most appropriate mental health provider to refer her to?

a) **Psychiatrist**
b) Marriage and Family Therapist
c) Clinical Social Worker
d) Family doctor
e) I don't know the answer

21. According to research, one of the most important factors in predicting the improvement of a mental health issue is:

a) The individual's gender
b) **The individual's quality of social support**
c) The individual's family history of a mental health issues
d) The individual's age
e) I don't know the answer

22. Jane arrives to class and she tells that she just wish she hadn't woken up this morning. Jane then explains that she thinks everyone would be better off if she just wasn't around anymore. Jane said she would prefer to just end her life. Based on what Jane has said, what is most accurate way to describe what Jane is experiencing?

a) She is currently experiencing symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder.
b) She is currently experiencing symptoms of major depressive disorder
c) **She is currently experiencing symptoms of suicidality.**
d) She is currently experiencing major depressive disorder with suicidal thoughts.
e) I don't know the answer

23. According to research, which of the following factors is most important to consider if someone is currently telling you they are suicidal?

a) If they have past, unsuccessful suicide attempts
b) If they have a plan to attempt suicide
c) **If they have the means to complete a suicide**
d) These factors are all important to consider together
e) I don't know the answer

24. According to research, who is most likely to attempt suicide?

a) Males
b) **Females**
c) They are equally likely
d) There is not a clear answer provided by research
e) I don't know the answer

25. According to research, who is at a higher risk to die by suicide?

a) Males
b) Females
c) They are equally likely
d) There is not a clear answer provided by research
e) I don't know the answer

26. According to research, what age group is at the highest risk to die by suicide?

a) Adolescents (12-18 years old)
b) Young Adults (18-29 years old)
c) Middle age (45-64 years old)
d) Older adults (85+ years old)
e) I don't know the answer

27. According to research, what race/ethnicity is at a higher risk to die by suicide?

a) White
b) Black
c) American Indian
d) Hispanic
e) I don't know the answer

28. According to research, asking someone directly if they are suicidal has what effect?

a) Increases the likelihood they will attempt suicide
b) Decreases the likelihood they will attempt suicide
c) Neither increases or decreases the likelihood they will attempt suicide
d) There is not a clear answer provided by research
e) I don't know the answer

29. Who is the most appropriate person to work with an individual that is suicidal?
a) Family practice doctor
b) Registered Nurse
c) School administrator
d) Clinical psychologist
e) I don't know the answer

30. What is the first step you should take when someone tells you they are suicidal?

a) Leave the person and immediately contact a therapist
b) Persuade the person to stay with you until you can find help
c) Ask the person if they have been suicidal in the past
d) Only worry about the individual if they have a specific plan
e) I don't know the answer

Self-Efficacy Items

The following statements describe situations regarding mental health issues. Read each statement and then respond by indicating your current (at this moment) level of confidence with completing the task described in each statement.

1. I can identify each of the diagnostic criteria for Major Depressive Disorder.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

2. I can identify each of the diagnostic criteria for Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

3. I can identify when someone is experiencing signs of depression based on their behaviors and thoughts they are sharing with me.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

4. I can identify when someone is experiencing signs of anxiety based on their behaviors and thoughts they are sharing with me.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

5. I understand the clinical symptoms that indicate when someone may be experiencing more severe feelings than 'normal' feelings experienced in life.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

6. I understand the differences between regular sadness and nervousness compared to Major Depressive Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

7. I can explain the difference between depression and anxiety accurately.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

8. I know at least three national organizations that work to prevent mental health issues or suicide.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

9. In my experience, having conversations about mental health issues could help to decrease stigma attached to mental health.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

10. I can identify the evidenced-based treatments that are most effective at treating mental health issues.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

11. I can have conversations about mental health issues based on factual information.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

12. I can tell the difference between an empirically supported treatment and a non-empirically supported treatment.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

13. I can determine if a specific insurance plan covers the expenses of accessing mental health resources.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

14. I can identify who to contact in my community and state to advocate for increased resources for mental health issues.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

15. I can identify and access mental health resources in my community.
a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

16. I can identify when someone needs professional help due to emotional or behavioral problems.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

17. I can talk to someone about accessing mental health resources for depression or anxiety in a kind and empathetic manner.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

18. I understand how to make appropriate referrals to mental health services when someone needs help for a mental health issue.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

19. I know how to set healthy boundaries with someone when they are experiencing consistent mental health issues that help keep us both safe.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

20. I know how to ask questions to better understand someone's current mood and thoughts and if they pose a threat of harm to themselves or others.

a) Not at all confident
b) A little confident
c) Somewhat confident
d) Mostly confident
e) Almost completely confident
f) Completely confident

Behavior Items

The following statements will describe a situation regarding mental health issues that you may have encountered in the past three months, in someone that you know reasonably well. Read each statement and then indicate the frequency by which you have personally participated in the described behavior.

1. How often in the past three months have you recognized symptoms that could be indicative of a diagnosable mental health issue?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has mental health issues
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ times

2. Have you recognized someone exhibiting symptoms or behaviors that are diagnosable characteristics of depression?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has depression
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 times
g) 6+ Times

3. Have you recognized someone exhibiting symptoms or behaviors that are diagnosable characteristics of anxiety?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has anxiety
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

4. Have you recognized someone that has experienced a mental state (e.g., sadness, nervousness, depression, anxiety) that has affected their relationships with others (e.g., friends, family members, co-workers)?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has had this experience
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

5. Have you recognized someone that has had a mental state (e.g., sadness, nervousness, depression, anxiety) that has affected their ability in school, their quality of work, or their personal life?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has had this experience
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

6. Have you engaged someone in a conversation about the importance of professionally treating their mental health issues?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has unaddressed mental health issues
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

7. Have you talked with someone about the negative effects of not treating a mental health issue as soon as symptoms arise?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has unaddressed mental health issues
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

8. Have you contacted a mental health provider to help someone access mental health resources?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has needed these resources
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

9. Have you researched or called a mental health provider to find the best treatment option available for a mental health issue that someone you know is experiencing?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has an unaddressed mental health issue
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

10. Have you researched or contacted an insurance agency for someone to see if they will pay for mental health services?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has needed these resources
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

11. Have you asked someone who showed signs/symptoms of a mental health issue if they are doing 'okay' or if they needed help?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has had this experience
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

12. Have you encouraged someone who was experiencing emotional or behavioral problems to seek help from a professional?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has had this experience
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

13. Have you helped someone who was experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety receive help from a professional?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has unaddressed depression or anxiety
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

14. Have you told someone who was considering suicide, to get help from a professional?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has had this experience
b) 0 Times
c) 1 Time
d) 2 Times
e) 3 Times
f) 4-5 Times
g) 6+ Times

15. Have you helped someone who was considering suicide to get help from a professional?

a) Not applicable; No one I know has had this experience
b) 1 Time
c) 2 Times
d) 3 Times
e) 4-5 Times
f) 6+ Times