



Welcome

Psychological First Aid: Helping Others in Times of Stress



July 2006

Instructor Introductions

- ◆ Name
- ◆ Background



Housekeeping Items

- ◆ Breaks
- ◆ Location of restrooms
- ◆ Emergency exits
- ◆ Cell phones and pagers
- ◆ Sign-in sheet, Course Record Addendum (Form 6418A)
- ◆ Course Evaluation



Course Purpose

...To enable you to provide basic care, comfort, and support to people who are experiencing disaster-related stress...

Course Objectives

After completing all the segments of this course, you will be able to:

- ◆ Notice the signs of stress in clients, co-workers, and yourself.
- ◆ Give immediate support to people who may be experiencing stress by implementing PFA principles.
- ◆ Obtain additional mental health support for yourself, co-workers, and clients, when needed.

Workshop Design

- ◆ Segment 1: Defining Psychological First Aid
- ◆ Segment 2: Recognizing Disaster-related Stress
- ◆ Segment 3: Embracing the Principles of Psychological First Aid
- ◆ Segment 4: Making Appropriate Referrals
- ◆ Segment 5: Practicing Psychological First Aid Principles

Segment 1

Defining Psychological First Aid



Segment 1 Objectives

- ◆ In addition to understanding the purpose and objectives of the course, you will be able to:
 - Define the concept of Psychological First Aid.
 - Describe the relevance of Psychological First Aid.

What is Psychological First Aid?

- ◆ The practice of recognizing and responding to people who need help because they are feeling stress, resulting from the disaster situations within which they find themselves.



Why is PFA Important?

- ◆ Knowing how to provide Psychological First Aid can help you to:
 - Create a compassionate environment for disaster survivors and workers.
 - Assess what a person might need at a particular time.
 - Provide immediate support to those in stressful situations.
 - Help others cope in the face of stressful events.

Segment 2

Recognizing Disaster-related Stress



Segment 2 Purpose

- ◆ Segment 2 focuses on symptoms in the various categories that indicate disaster-related stress in adults and children:
 - Feelings, emotional states
 - Thinking, expression of thoughts
 - Physical effects
 - Behaviors
 - Spiritual



Segment 2 Objectives

- ◆ Describe the typical stress reactions of adults and children that may result from exposure to disaster.
- ◆ Identify the characteristics of a disaster and the disaster response that affect individuals' responses.
- ◆ Describe the characteristics of individuals that affect their personal responses.



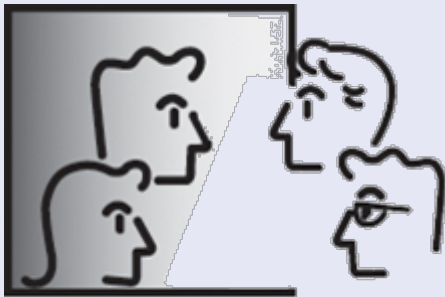
Stress Reactions of Adults

- ◆ Stress reactions vary from person to person and:
 - Can disappear.
 - Remain the same.
 - Get somewhat better.
 - Grow considerably worse.
- ◆ The severity and duration of stress depends on how well people manage and cope with their situations.



Exercise 1

Stress Reactions of Adults



From your own experiences with adults in disaster relief operations, describe how people react when they are in these stressful situations.

Feelings

Thoughts

Physical Effects

Behaviors

Spiritual

Stress Reactions In Adults: Feelings

- ◆ Rage, anger, irritability
- ◆ Resentment
- ◆ Anxiety, fear
- ◆ Despair, hopelessness
- ◆ Numb
- ◆ Terrified
- ◆ Guilty
- ◆ Sad
- ◆ Helpless, loss of control
- ◆ Uninterested
- ◆ Overwhelmed

Stress Reactions In Adults: Thoughts

- ◆ Difficulty concentrating and thinking
- ◆ Difficulty making decisions
- ◆ Forgetful
- ◆ Confused
- ◆ Distortion of sense of time
- ◆ Lowered self-esteem
- ◆ Self-blame
- ◆ Intrusive thoughts, memories, flashbacks
- ◆ Worry
- ◆ A sense of being cut off from reality
- ◆ Self-harm



Stress Reactions In Adults: Physical Effects

- ◆ Fatigue, difficulty sleeping
- ◆ Agitation
- ◆ Physical complaints (e.g., headaches, stomach problems)
- ◆ Decreased or increased appetite
- ◆ Decreased or increased sex drive
- ◆ Easily startled
- ◆ Increased cravings for and use of caffeine, nicotine, sweets, alcohol, illicit substances
- ◆ Lightheaded
- ◆ Weak

Stress Reactions In Adults: Behaviors

- ◆ Crying spells
- ◆ Angry outbursts
- ◆ Avoiding people, places, and situations
- ◆ Argumentative
- ◆ School and work problems
- ◆ Risky behaviors (driving erratically, multiple sexual partners, unsafe sex)
- ◆ Inattention to appearance, personal hygiene, self-care

Stress Reactions In Adults: Spiritual

- ◆ Change in relationship with or belief about God/Higher Power
- ◆ Abandonment of prayer, ritual, scripture, devotions, sacraments
- ◆ Questioning the beliefs of their faith
- ◆ Rejection of spiritual care providers
- ◆ Struggle with questions about the meaning of life, justice, fairness, afterlife
- ◆ Loss of familiar spiritual supports
- ◆ Loss of faith

Stress Reactions of Children

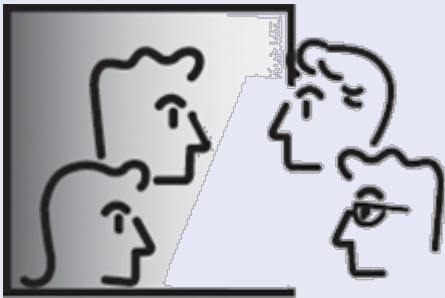
- ◆ Stress reactions in children can vary by child and age.
- ◆ Children are particularly sensitive to:
 - Separation from familiar surroundings, people, and possessions
 - Disruption of routines





Exercise 2

Stress Reactions of Children



From your own experiences with children in disaster relief operations, describe how children react when they are in these stressful situations.

Feelings

Thinking

Physical Effects

Behaviors

Stress Reactions In Children: Feelings

- ◆ Fear, terrified
- ◆ Anxious
- ◆ Sad
- ◆ Guilty
- ◆ Rage, anger, irritability
helpless
- ◆ Loss of interest
- ◆ Changing mood

Stress Reactions In Children: Thinking

- ◆ Difficulty concentrating and thinking
- ◆ Difficulty making decisions
- ◆ Forgetful
- ◆ Confused
- ◆ Distortion of sense of time
- ◆ Lowered self-esteem
- ◆ Self-blame
- ◆ Intrusive thoughts, memories, flashbacks
- ◆ Worry
- ◆ A sense of being cut off from reality
- ◆ Self-harm

Stress Reactions In Children: Physical

- ◆ Fatigue, difficulty sleeping
- ◆ Agitation
- ◆ Increased activity level/hyperactive
- ◆ Physical complaints (e.g., headaches, stomach aches)
- ◆ Decreased or increased appetite
- ◆ Easily startled
- ◆ Bed wetting

Stress Reactions In Children: Behaviors

- ◆ Crying, whining, screaming
- ◆ Trembling
- ◆ Clinging to parents and caregivers
- ◆ Aggressive or disruptive behavior, temper tantrums
- ◆ Withdrawn
- ◆ Avoiding people, places, situations
- ◆ Regressive behaviors (thumb sucking, bedwetting, not wanting to sleep alone)
- ◆ Refusal to attend school or day care
- ◆ Difficulty getting along with siblings and parents
- ◆ Using drugs and alcohol
- ◆ Re-living events through play (young children)
- ◆ Asking a lot of questions or telling stories related to event
- ◆ Argumentative, defiant



Contributing Factors to the Stress Response

- ◆ Disaster characteristics
- ◆ Disaster response characteristics
- ◆ Individual characteristics
- ◆ Factors that affect you as a disaster responder

Disaster Characteristics

- ◆ Type of disaster
- ◆ When it occurs
- ◆ Who is affected
- ◆ What is affected
- ◆ Where it happens



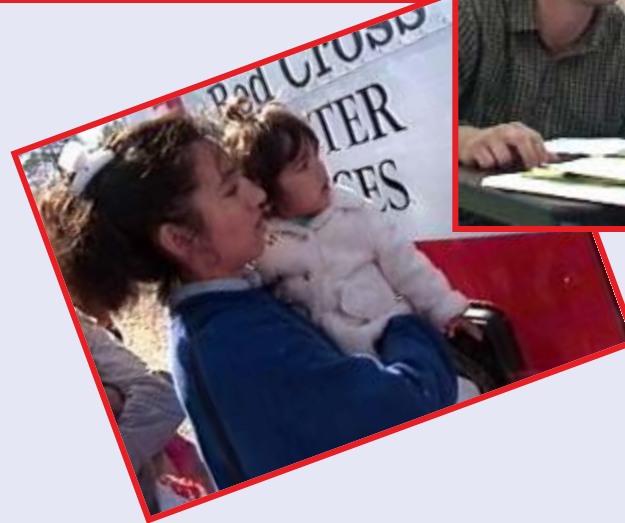


Disaster Response Characteristics

- ◆ Level of preparedness
- ◆ Post-disaster living situation (e.g., Individuals may need to evacuate their homes and stay in shelters, with friends or family, or in a hotel.)
- ◆ Limited availability of food and water
- ◆ Delays in receiving relief services or medical care

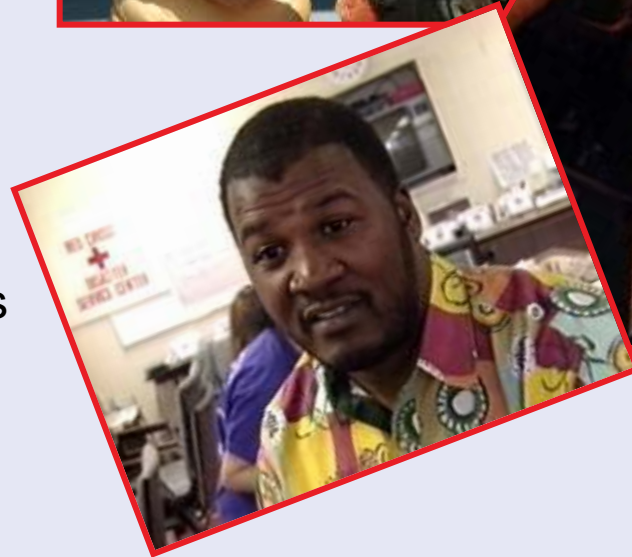
Individual Characteristics

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Family composition
- ◆ Cultural, ethnic, racial background
- ◆ Level of exposure to the disaster
- ◆ Loss of or injury to family member, other loved ones, pets
- ◆ Loss of possessions
- ◆ Pre-disaster stress
- ◆ Connectedness with others



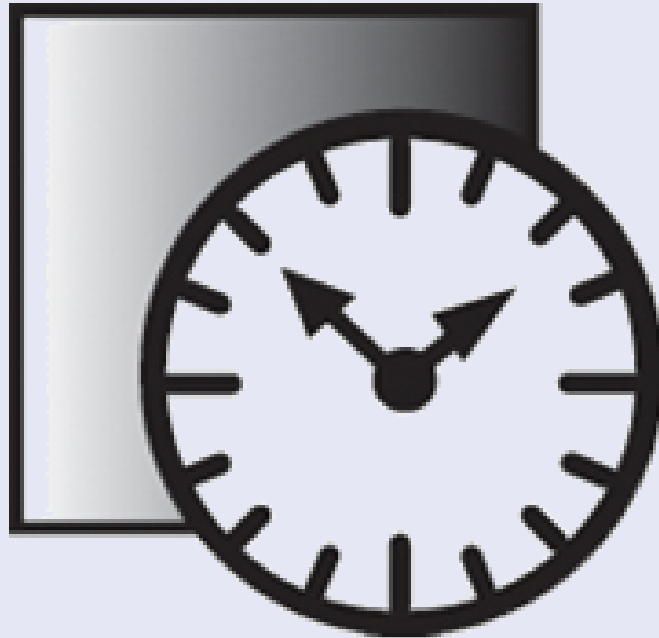
Factors that Affect You as a Disaster Responder

- ◆ Leaving family members and loved ones to go on assignment
- ◆ Working in unfamiliar and challenging settings
- ◆ Staying in a staff shelter with little privacy
- ◆ Encountering unfamiliar cultural or ethnic populations whose primary language may not be English
- ◆ Listening to survivors' stories
- ◆ Seeing disturbing sights
- ◆ Working with difficult supervisors and co-workers
- ◆ Returning home





Break



Segment 3

Embracing the Principles of Psychological First Aid



Segment 3 Purpose

...To introduce you to the principles of Psychological First Aid...

Segment 3 Objectives

- ◆ Describe the categorical principles of PFA.
- ◆ Understand the implications and scope of each categorical principle, including the:
 - Awareness you can develop.
 - Attitudes you can adopt.
 - Actions you can take.

Psychological First Aid Actions

- ◆ Making a connection
- ◆ Helping people be safe
- ◆ Being kind, calm, and compassionate
- ◆ Meeting people's basic needs
- ◆ Listening
- ◆ Giving realistic assurance
- ◆ Encouraging good coping
- ◆ Helping people connect
- ◆ Giving accurate and timely information
- ◆ Making a referral to a Disaster Mental Health worker
- ◆ Ending the conversation
- ◆ Taking care of yourself

Make a Connection

- ◆ Introduce yourself.
- ◆ Be fully present.



Help People Be Safe

- ◆ Be aware of your surroundings.
- ◆ Enter a scene only when you are sure it is safe.
- ◆ Help people to reach a safe place.
- ◆ Call for medical assistance, if needed (Call 9-1-1).
- ◆ Help people to follow emergency instructions.

Be Kind, Calm, and Compassionate

- ◆ Express patience and compassion, even if people are being difficult.
- ◆ Speak in a calm voice.
- ◆ Remain courteous and respectful of people.
 - Pay attention to cultural appropriateness of physical proximity, eye contact, and gestures.

Meet People's Basic Needs

- ◆ Offer or direct them to food and water.
- ◆ Provide or direct them to a safe place or shelter.
- ◆ Check to see if they are with family or friends.
- ◆ Encourage them to sleep and get rest. (e.g., “Take a break, take a walk.”)
- ◆ Direct them to a Disaster Mental Health worker when needed.

Listen

- ◆ Be attentive.
- ◆ Listen carefully.
- ◆ Be available.



Give Realistic Reassurance

- ◆ Help people to feel less anxious or worried by letting them know that what they are feeling or thinking is understandable.

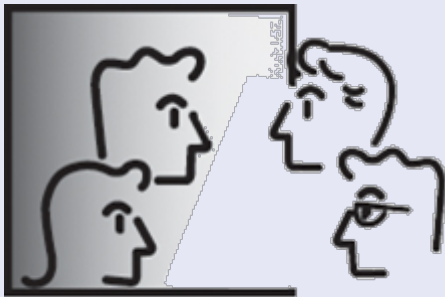


Encourage Good Coping



Exercise 3

Coping Strategies



- What are some things that people do in response to stressful situations that may not be helpful in their coping?
- What are some of the things people may do that help them to cope with or endure stressful situations?

Negative Coping Strategies

Positive Coping Strategies

Help People Connect

- ◆ Get them access to a phone so they can contact their loved ones.
- ◆ Suggest other methods of communication such as e-mail.
- ◆ Encourage them to complete the Welfare Information Notification Request form (2079-I), if the Welfare Information Field Team is activated.

Give Accurate and Timely Information

- ◆ Guide people to the appropriate sources or resources for information in your setting.



Make a Referral to a Disaster Mental Health Worker

- ◆ Know when and how to make a referral.



End the Conversation

- ◆ Ask if there is anything else you can do to assist him or her.
- ◆ Provide clients with available phone numbers or other contact information.

Take Care of Yourself

**Model the
behaviors you
teach to others!**



Segment 4

Making Appropriate Referrals



Segment 4 Purpose

...To learn to identify individuals who may need additional support from a Disaster Mental Health worker...

Segment Objectives

- ◆ Identify the boundaries of PFA and your ability to provide help.
- ◆ Understand the purpose and use of the “PsySTART™ Field Triage Tag as a method for identifying persons who may need additional help.
- ◆ Recognize situations requiring referrals to Red Cross Disaster Mental Health.

Linking with Disaster Mental Health

- ◆ Triage strategies
 - Position yourself to recognize individuals who need additional services
 - Use the PsySTART™ Field Triage Tag to evaluate those who are at risk
 - Link individuals at risk with DMH



When to link with DMH

- ◆ Link with DMH Services when individuals:
 - Express the desire or intent to harm themselves or others.
 - Show extreme reactions that do not improve or seem to worsen.
 - Experience the loss of a loved one, or serious injuries to themselves or to loved ones, or the situation where a loved one is unaccounted for or missing.

PsySTART™ Field Triage Tag

- ◆ Review the PsySTART™ Field Triage Tag before each disaster relief assignment.
 - Place a copy in your “go-bag.”
 - Review the questions on the card.
 - Keep a wallet-sized with you.






PsySTART™ Behavioral Health Triage System		Field Triage
CLIENT NAME		
ICMIE (Pre-event)		
ARC WORKER (Name/ID#)		
ARC DMH CONTACT (Name/Telephone)		
Saw/heard death or serious injury of others?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Felt they (or loved one) almost died?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Received physical injury or self/loved one is physically ill?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Received medical treatment (self/loved one)? If yes, describe:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Death of family member, friend, schoolmate, pet? If yes, list:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Separated from family member?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Child separated from parent?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Family member missing? If yes, list:	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Home not livable? Circle one: Destroyed Damaged Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Expresses thought/intent to harm self?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Expresses thought/intent to seriously harm others?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Note to ARC Worker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If any RED items are checked above, contact site supervisor and DMH immediately • If any YELLOW or ORANGE items are checked, contact DMH as soon as possible and indicate triage items from above 		
<small>PsySTART™ ©2002-2006 Merrill D. Scheiber, Ph.D.</small>		

Using the PsySTART™ Field Triage Tag

- ◆ If “yes” is indicated in response to any of the first nine questions (notice the yellow and orange yes boxes), then:
 - Contact a DMH worker as soon as practical.
 - Provide enough information, so that the Red Cross DMH worker can locate the individual later.
- ◆ If “yes” is indicated in response to either one or both of the two last questions (harm to self or others), then:
 - Make certain someone stays with individual.
 - Notify the site supervisor and DMH worker immediately.

Wallet-sized PsySTART™ Field Triage Tag

- ◆ Keep this card with you in pocket or wallet.
- ◆ Use as a reference when providing information to your supervisor or a DMH worker.
- ◆ Include important DMH contact information on the bottom of the card.

PsySTART™ Behavioral Health Triage System		YES	NO
Saw/heard death or serious injury of others?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Felt they (or loved one) almost died?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Received physical injury or self/loved one is physically ill?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Received medical treatment (self/loved one)?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Death of family member, friend, schoolmate, pet?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Separated from family member?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child separated from parent?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family member missing?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home not livable?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expresses thought/intent to harm self?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expresses thought/intent to seriously harm others?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 If yes, contact DMH as soon as possible.			
 If yes, contact site supervisor and DMH immediately.			
DMH Contact: _____			

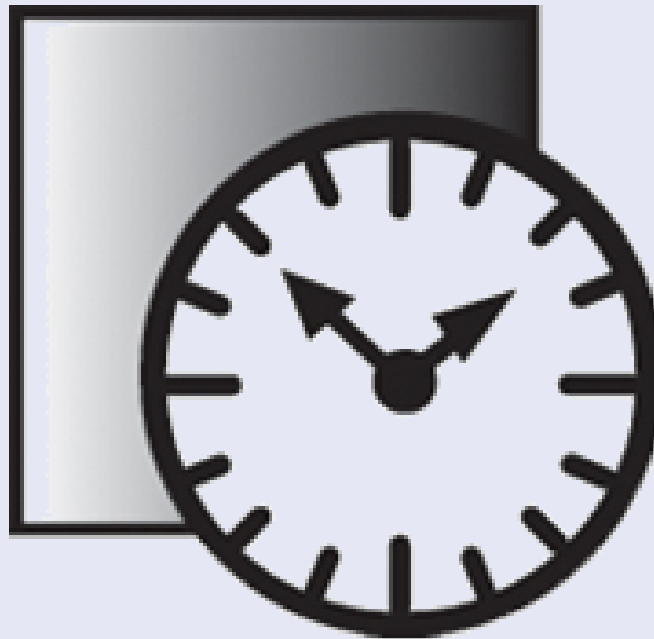
PsySTART™ ©2002-2006 Merril D. Schroder, Ph.D.

Getting Help Fast

- ◆ Get help immediately, if an individual:
 - Threatens to harm or kill himself/herself or others.
 - Cannot be calmed after you have used the principles of PFA and have made attempts to comfort and respond to her/his requests and/or needs
 - Behaves erratically and exhibits questionable judgment, because he or she is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
 - Acts confused and disoriented, saying or doing things that do not make sense in the context of the situation and that may result in harm to himself/herself or others.



Break



Segment 5

Practicing Psychological First Aid Principles



Segment 5 Purpose

...To put into practice the principles and actions of PFA...

Segment 5 Objectives

- ◆ Understand the governing attitudes and behaviors that presuppose the success of PFA.
- ◆ Practice using the actions of PFA in scenario-based exercises.

PFA in Action: Now you can do it!

- ◆ Be tolerant.
- ◆ Keep boundaries.
- ◆ Respect people's privacy.
- ◆ Ask for help.
- ◆ Take care of yourself.



Dos and Don'ts

	Do	Do Not
Behavior (your actions and body language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sit facing or directly beside the client or worker. ■ Make eye contact as appropriate, depending upon cultural expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sit back with your arms folded in front of you. ■ Look around the room or appear distracted while the client/worker is talking to you. ■ Walk away from the client or worker while he or she is talking to you.
Expression (what you say and how you say it)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "It sounds like that may have been a very difficult (frustrating/frightening/stressful) situation?" ■ "Is there anything I can do for you right now?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "You should be thankful that you and your family got out alive." ■ "Look, I really don't have time to listen to this..." ■ "That doesn't sound so bad...you should hear what this other guy went through." ■ "It must have been God's will." ■ "You really shouldn't feel that way." ■ "Don't feel (guilty, bad, nervous, etc.)."



Exercise 4

Make a connection

Be kind, calm, and compassionate

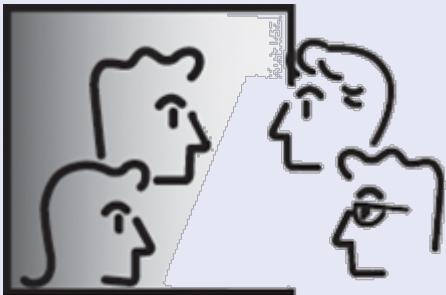
Listen

Help people be safe

Meet people's basic needs

Give reassurance

Pulling It All Together in Practice



This exercise is intended to explore various situations in which PFA should be used. Your objective is to determine what you will say and how you will act to offer PFA to those individuals described in the scenarios .

Encourage good coping

Give accurate and timely information

Help people connect

Make a referral to Disaster Mental Health

End the conversation



Scenario 1





Course Summary

- ◆ Self-review questions and answers
- ◆ Clarification of concepts
- ◆ Wrap-up