

Psychological First Aid For All



Supporting People
in the Aftermath
of Crisis Events

World Mental Health Day 2016

World Mental Health Day 2016

- World Mental Health Day is an annual event which aims to:
 1. Raise awareness of mental health issues across the globe
 2. Mobilize efforts in support of mental health
- Mental health problems are an extremely important issue worldwide due to their impact on the human rights and quality of life of those affected and their families
- This year's theme: **Psychological First Aid (PFA)**

Psychological First Aid: Guide for Field Workers

- WHO publication
http://www.who.int/mental_health/emergencies/en/
- Developed in collaborative effort between WHO and NGOs
- Endorsed by 24 UN/NGO international agencies
- Available in numerous languages

Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers



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Outline

- Psychological First Aid (PFA):
 - First-line psychosocial support after a crisis event
- What PFA is and is not?
- Who, when and where of PFA
- How to help responsibly
- Action principles: Look ~ Listen ~ Link
- Things to say and do
- Supporting those who likely need special attention
- Self-care and team-care for helpers
- PFA capacity building for disaster preparedness and response
- PFA resources (translations, adaptations, online forums)

Crisis Events

- Crisis events – both large-scale and individual
 - occur in every community in the world
 - Large-scale events include natural disasters, war and terrorist attacks, disease outbreaks, large-scale displacement of people and communities
 - Individual events affect one or a few people, such as accidents, robbery, assault
- They have physical, social and emotional consequences for those affected

PFA: First-Line Psychosocial Support

- PFA is important, first-line psychosocial support for people affected by crisis events
 - PFA, like medical “first aid”, is not enough on its own
- Immediately after a crisis event, those who assist are often family members, neighbors, teachers, community members and first responders of various kinds (emergency medical teams, police, firefighters)
- Term “PFA” was first coined in the 1940s but its use has increased in modern-day crisis events

Examples of people who are learning PFA



- Europe: psychosocial support staff of local agencies
- Suriname and Latin America: police, firemen, nurses
- Iraq: UNHCR protection officers
- West Bank/Gaza: family members, humanitarian aid staff
- Sudan: psychiatrists, psychologists, emergency staff
- Sri Lanka: NGO and government staff, local villagers
- International Organization for Migration MHPSS in Emergencies course: humanitarian aid workers
- UN/NGO managers of humanitarian aid agencies to support their own staff
- Japan: national defense force, police, embassy staff
- West Africa: medical personnel, Ebola burial teams, families
- Central/eastern Europe: international school counselors

What is PFA?

Humane, supportive & practical assistance to fellow human beings who recently suffered a serious stressor:

- Non-intrusive, practical care and support
- Assessing needs and concerns
- Helping people to address basic needs (food, water)
- Listening, but not pressuring people to talk
- Comforting people and helping them to feel calm
- Helping people connect to information, services and social supports
- Protecting people from further harm

What PFA is NOT?

- NOT something only professionals can do
- NOT professional counselling
- NOT a clinical or psychiatric intervention (although can be part of good clinical care)
- NOT “psychological debriefing”
- NOT asking people to analyze what happened or put time and events in order
- NOT pressuring people to tell you their story, or asking details about how they feel or what happened

Why PFA?

- People do better over the long term if they...
 - Feel safe, connected to others, calm & hopeful
 - Have access to social, physical & emotional support
 - Regain a sense of control by being able to help themselves



PFA: Who, When, Where?

- **Who** can benefit from PFA?
 - Boys, girls, women and men who have recently experienced a crisis event and are distressed
 - Some people need more than PFA alone such as people with life-threatening injuries or unable to care for themselves or their children
- **When** should PFA be provided?
 - When encountering a person in distress, usually immediately following a crisis event
- **Where** should PFA be provided?
 - Anywhere that is safe for the helper and affected person, ideally with some privacy as appropriate to the situation

How to Help Responsibly

- Adapt what you do to take account of the person's culture
- Respect safety, dignity and rights
 - Safety: don't expose people to further harm, ensure (as best you can) they are safe and protected from further physical or psychological harm
 - Dignity: treat people with respect and according to their cultural and social norms
 - Rights: act only in people's best interest, ensure access to impartial assistance without discrimination, assist people to claim their rights and access available support
- Be aware of other emergency response measures
- Care for caregivers: practice self-care and team-care

Helping Responsibly: Ethical Guidelines

Do's

- Be honest and trustworthy.
- Respect a person's right to make their own decisions.
- Be aware of and set aside your own biases and prejudices.
- Make it clear to people that even if they refuse help now, they can still access help in the future.
- Respect privacy and keep the person's story confidential, as appropriate.
- Behave appropriately according to the person's culture, age and gender.

Don'ts

- Don't exploit your relationship as a helper.
- Don't ask the person for any money or favor for helping them.
- Don't make false promises or give false information.
- Don't exaggerate your skills.
- Don't force help on people, and don't be intrusive or pushy.
- Don't pressure people to tell you their story.
- Don't share the person's story with others.
- Don't judge the person for their actions or feelings.

PFA Action Principles

Prepare

Look



Listen



Link



PFA Action Principles

Prepare

- Learn about the crisis event.
- Learn about available services and supports.
- Learn about safety and security concerns.

Look



- Observe for safety.
- Observe for people with obvious urgent basic needs.
- Observe for people with serious distress reactions.

Listen



- Make contact with people who may need support.
- Ask about people's needs and concerns.
- Listen to people and help them feel calm.

Link



- Help people address basic needs and access services.
- Help people cope with problems.
- Give information.
- Connect people with loved ones and social support.

Good Communication: Things to Say and Do



- Try to find a quiet place to talk and minimize outside distractions.
- Stay near the person but keep an appropriate distance depending on their age, gender and culture.
- Let them know you hear what they are saying, for example, nod your head and stay attentive
- Be patient and calm.
- Provide factual information IF you have it. Be honest about what you know and what you don't know. *"I don't know but I will try to find out about that for you."*
- Give information in a way the person can understand - keep it simple.
- Acknowledge how they are feeling, and any losses or important events they share with you, such as loss of home or death of a loved one. *"I'm so sorry..."*
- Respect privacy. Keep the person's story confidential, especially when they disclose very private events.
- Acknowledge the person's strengths and how they have helped themselves.

Good Communication: Things NOT to Say and Do

- Don't pressure someone to tell their story.
- Don't interrupt or rush someone's story.
- Don't give your opinions of the person's situation, just listen.
- Don't touch the person if you're not sure it is appropriate to do so.
- Don't judge what they have or haven't done, or how they are feeling. Don't say... *"You shouldn't feel that way."* or *"You should feel lucky you survived."*
- Don't make up things you don't know.
- Don't use too technical terms.
- Don't tell them someone else's story.
- Don't talk about your own troubles.
- Don't give false promises or false reassurances.
- Don't feel you have to try to solve all the person's problems for them.
- Don't take away the person's strength and sense of being able to care for themselves.

People who Likely Need Special Attention (to be safe, to access services)

- Children and adolescents
 - Especially those separated from caregivers
- People with health conditions and disabilities
 - People who are non-mobile, or who have chronic illness, hearing/visual impairments (deaf or blind), or severe mental disorders
 - Frail elderly people, pregnant or nursing women
- People at risk of discrimination or violence
 - Women, people of certain ethnic or religious groups, people with mental disabilities



Practice self-care and team-care



- Before:
 - Are you ready to help?
 - Are you connected with a group or organization for safety and coordination?
- During:
 - How can you stay physically and emotionally healthy?
 - How can you know your limits?
 - How can you and your colleagues support one another?
- After:
 - How can you take time to rest, recover and reflect?

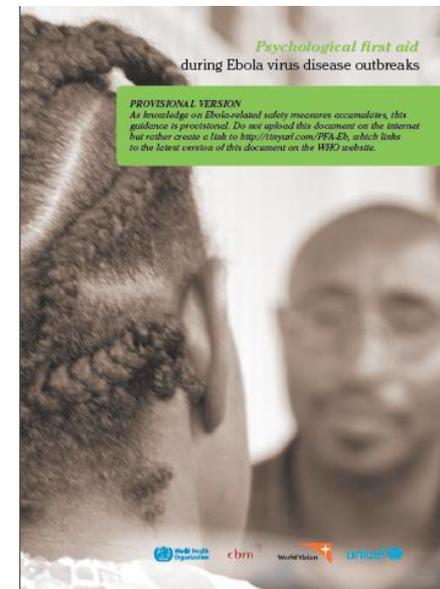
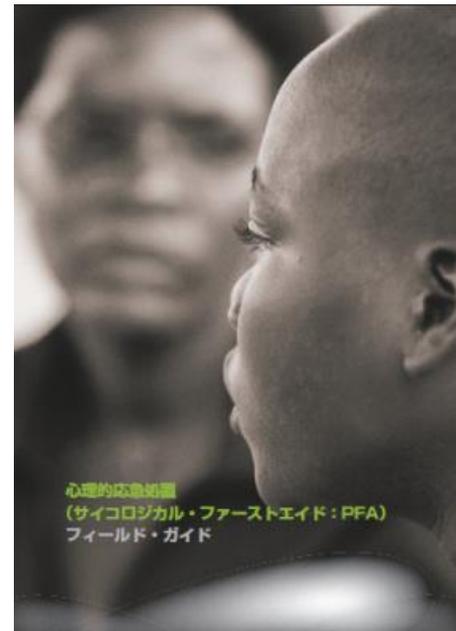
PFA Capacity Building: Disaster Preparedness & Response

- PFA orientation has been conducted in nearly all parts of the world with various types of people
- Standard practice for many humanitarian agencies



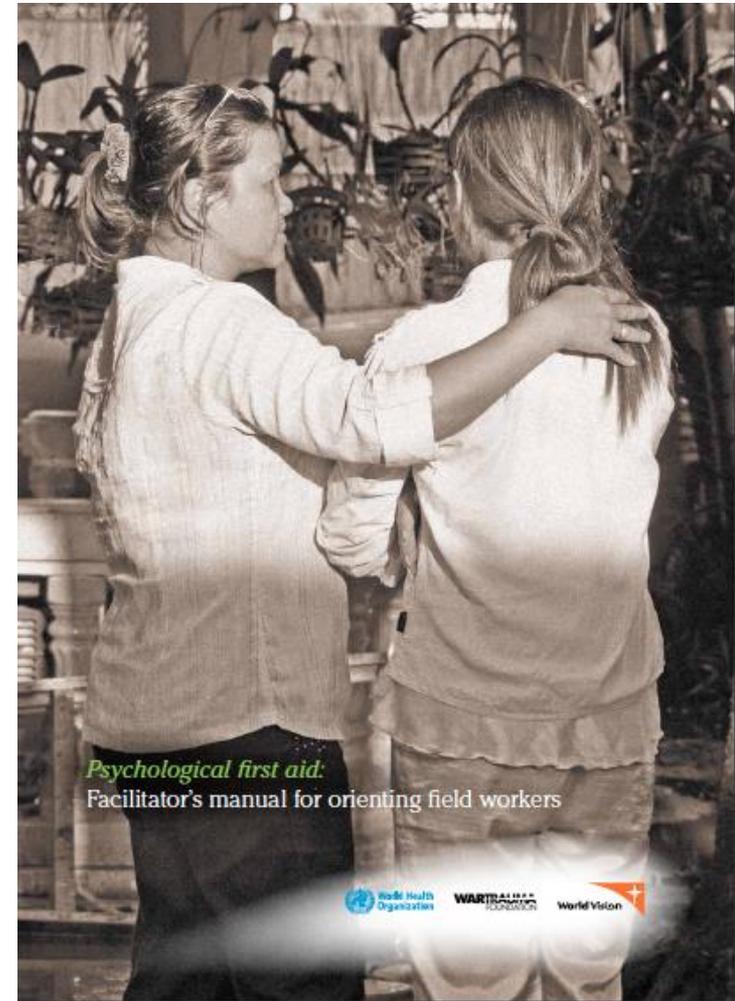
Adaptations and resources in local languages

- 20 translations available on the WHO website:
 - Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, English, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Japanese, Kiswahili, Korean, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Sinhala, Slovenian, Spanish, Tamil, Turkish, Urdu
 - PFA guide and facilitation manual adapted for the Ebola virus disease outbreak



PFA Facilitation Guide

- PFA facilitation guide and slide set are available on WHO website
- Half- and full-day agendas
 - Checklist for organizers
 - Step-by-step orientation
 - Slides and handouts
- Learning activities relevant to different cultures and countries around the world



Online Resources

- PFA helpers can join a global network of practitioners in an online learning forum on <http://mhpss.net>
- Find the latest PFA resources and trainings
- Share knowledge and experience from different regions and crisis events



PFA Training & Adaptation

Public Group, 151 members, active 1 week, 3 days ago

This group is for sharing of materials and experiences related to training on Psychological First Aid and adaptation of resources and training approaches to different cultural contexts, trainee groups and situations.

Do please join if you are currently adapting and implementing PFA training, and share your experiences and materials here.

Dignity in Mental Health: PFA for All

- PFA can be provided by professionals and non-professionals alike
- Everyone should have access to PFA following a crisis event, as part of the spectrum of mental health and psychosocial support
- PFA is widely used for disaster preparedness and response by governments, UN and NGOs
- Resources are freely available and adapted to local languages and contexts:
http://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/guide_field_workers/en/