Welcome

Psychological First Aid: Helping Others in Times of Stress

February 2012
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...
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
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 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 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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rage, anger, irritability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resentment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety, fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Despair, hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpless, loss of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninterested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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.
- Facilitate access to the Safe and Well website so they can reconnect with their loved ones (www.redcross.org/safeandwell).
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 phones numbers or other contact information.
Take Care of Yourself

Model the behaviors you teach to others!
Segment 4

Making Appropriate Referrals to Disaster Mental Health
Segment 4 Purpose

...To learn to identify and prioritize individuals who will benefit from PFA support from you and those who need to be seen by a DMH worker...
Segment Objectives

- Understand the limits of PFA
- Recognize situations requiring referrals to Red Cross DMH workers
Risk Factors for Responders: Serious - Reminder

- Remember – you may provide PFA to co-workers who have experienced serious risk factors and you should refer to a DMH worker.
- Make the referral no later than the end of your shift.
Risk Factors for Responders: Less Serious

Less serious risk factors include:

- Not feeling fully utilized on the disaster operation
- Difficult living and work physical conditions
- Co-worker or supervisor conflict
- Working in unfamiliar culture, language, customs, or foods
- Difficulty staying in touch with family or concerns about events at home
- Feeling like they did not accomplish enough
Risk Factors for Responders: Less Serious-Reminders

Less serious risk factors:

- You are best suited to provide PFA
- It is NOT necessary to refer these co-workers to a DMH worker unless the co-worker is having a very difficult time or you feel that the PFA support you provide is not sufficient
How to Talk to People About Connecting Them to a DMH Worker

◆ What are your ideas about what you can say to a person when they need further assistance from Mental Health?
You Can Do It!

记住 – YOU CAN DO IT! 通过应用心理急救（PFA）的原则在本课程中，YOU 可以为人们在灾难后恢复以及与同事的共同工作做出巨大改变！
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior (your actions and body language)</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Do Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sit facing or directly beside the client or worker.</td>
<td>Sit back with your arms folded in front of you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make eye contact as appropriate, depending upon cultural expectations.</td>
<td>Look around the room or appear distracted while the client/worker is talking to you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It sounds like that may have been a very difficult (frustrating/frightening/stressful) situation?”</td>
<td>“You should be thankful that you and your family got out alive.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Is there anything I can do for you right now?”</td>
<td>“Look, I really don’t have time to listen to this...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expression (what you say and how you say it)</th>
<th>Do</th>
<th>Do Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It sounds like that may have been a very difficult (frustrating/frightening/stressful) situation?”</td>
<td>“That doesn’t sound so bad...you should hear what this other guy went through.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Is there anything I can do for you right now?”</td>
<td>“It must have been God’s will.”</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“You really shouldn’t feel that way.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Don’t feel (guilty, bad, nervous, etc.).”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 4

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.

- Make a connection
- Help people be safe
- Be kind, calm, and compassionate
- Meet people’s basic needs
- Listen
- Give reassurance
- 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