

# Psychological First Aid and Process Management

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# Situations Requiring Psychological First Aid

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- Natural Disasters (earthquake, flood, wild life fire, etc.)
- Accidents (experiencing traffic or work accident)
- Experiencing loss (death of a relative or witnessing a death)
- Wars
- Being sexually or physically assaulted
- Torture
- Abduction/Detention
- Encountering a situation that threatens life or bodily integrity or being diagnosed with a disease



There may be many more events or situations that can be called traumatic.

To distinguish trauma;

Being a situation/event that threatens/disrupts the vital integrity of the person.

There must be a situation/event that exceeds the person's coping skills.

These situations can be experienced in different ways:

- The person might,
  - personally experience the traumatic event.
  - witness such events, and/or might help the people who experienced the event.
  - learn that such a traumatic event happened to a loved one.



*Roles of the  
Trauma Triangle*

## Trauma Related Symptoms

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- Temporary feelings of shock, fear, anger, guilt, shame, helplessness, and hopelessness
- Freezing reactions - the state of not feeling anything
- Confusion about place-space-time
- Indecisiveness, inability to concentrate, forgetfulness, general apathy
- Nervousness, fatigue, difficulty in sleeping
- Bodily aches and pains, irregular heartbeat, nausea, change in appetite, sudden startles





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- Restlessness, insecurity, withdrawal from people, sudden outbursts of anger.
  - Feeling rejected or abandoned, being overly judgmental and accusatory.
  - The desire to keep everything under control.
  - Alienation from the body or self.
  - Desire to turn to narcotic-sedative-stimulant substances.
  - Repetitive thoughts or actions.
  - Decreased will to live.



# Survivor's Guilt

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Survivor's guilt is a **response to an event in which someone else experienced loss but you did not.** While the name implies this to be a response to the loss of life, it could also be the loss of property, health, identity or a number of other things that are important to people.



# What is Psychological First Aid?

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- It is an early psychosocial intervention approach that is carried out during or after a disaster, accident, terrorist attack or any event that causes negative effects at the individual/social level (Brymer et al. 2006).
- PFA is NOT a diagnosis or treatment, it is a crisis intervention! (Ruzek et al. 2007)



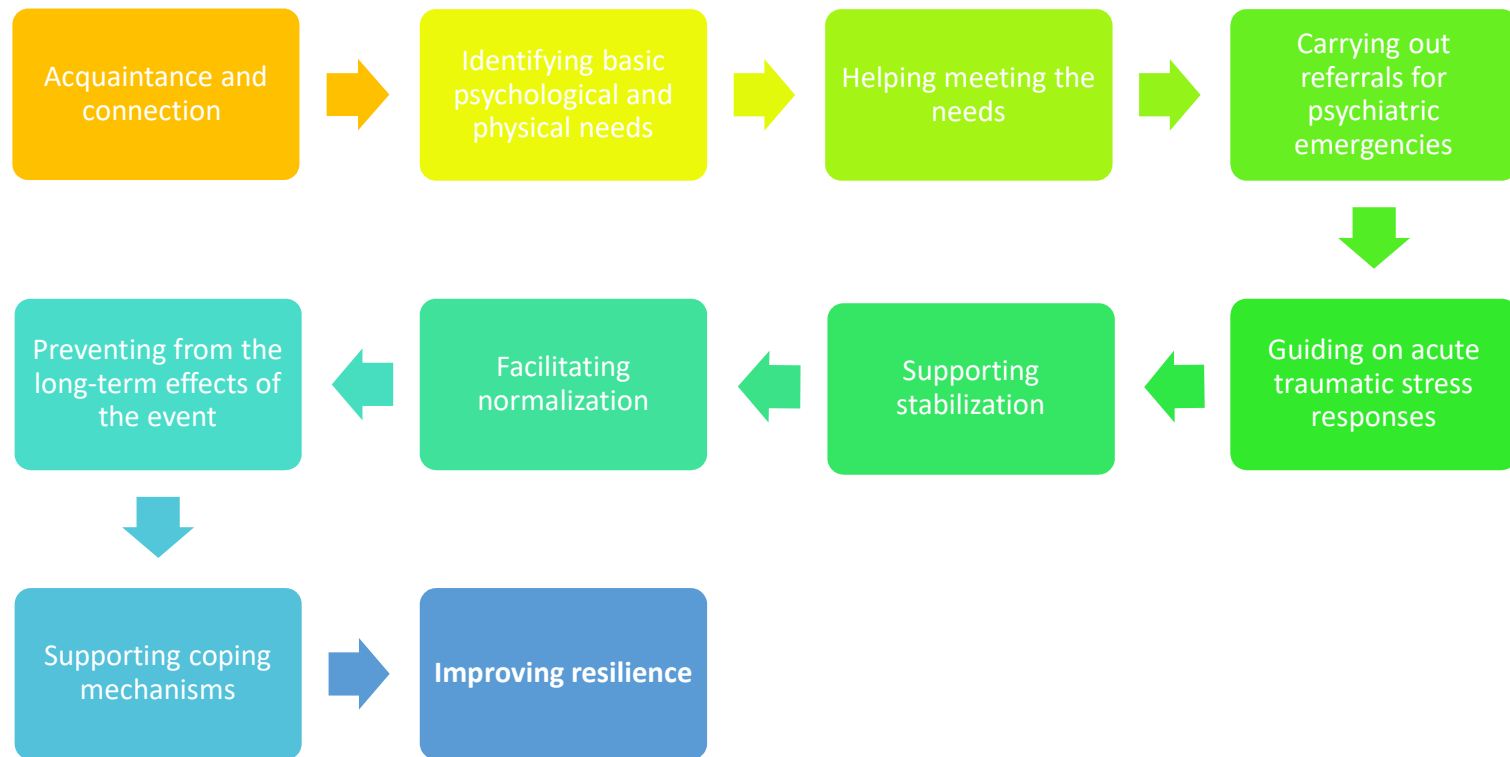


# Psychological First Aid

## Purposes

- Meeting the basic physical or psychological needs of people during or after the event.
- To minimize the effects of the event on individuals and possible post-traumatic stress symptoms as much as possible.
- Supporting adaptive functioning and coping in the short and long term.

# Steps of Psychological First Aid



(World Health Organization, 2011)

# *Look, Listen, Connect, Guide*

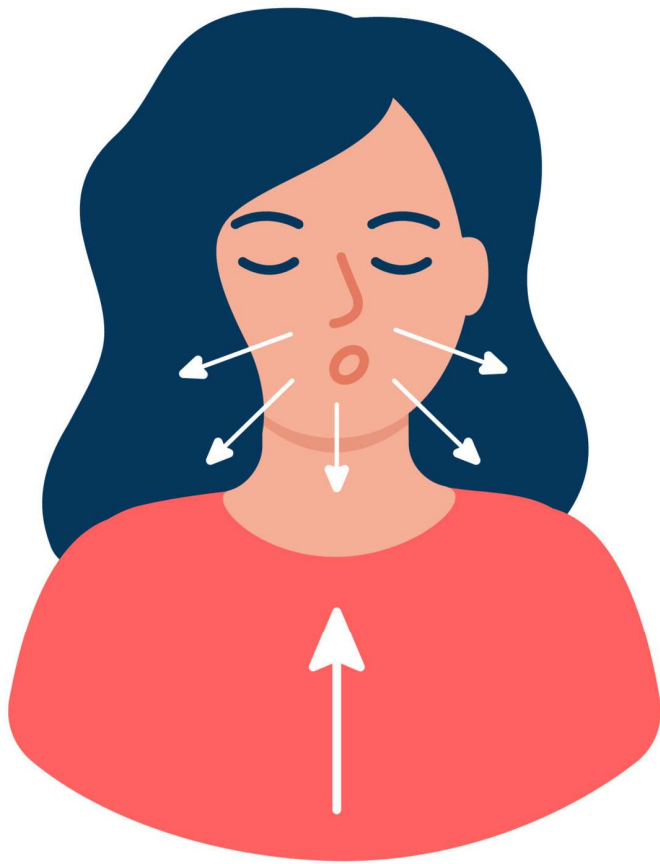
## Psychological First Aid,

- Is a type of support that anyone who's trained in this topic can give
- Is applicable during and after the event
- Is applied at the scene and in acute situations.
- Is non-intrusive, practical care and support.
- Is about putting people at ease and helping them feel calm.
- Provides the identification and elimination of needs.
- Involves listening to individuals but never forcing them to speak.
- Provides information and support.
- Protects the individual from further damage in times of crisis.



# What It Is NOT?

- It is not a treatment.
- It is not counseling or psychotherapy.
- It is not a specialized PRACTICE.
- It is not a discussion about the event.
- It is not psychological meaning or psychological information to the person.



# Coping Skills

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- Breathing Exercises
  - Box Breathing: It is among the simplest breathing techniques. It is done by diaphragmatic breathing.
  - For this exercise, sit in a comfortable, quiet, calm place. Then take a deep breath for 4 seconds. Then hold your breath for 4 seconds. Then exhale for 4 seconds. Finally, wait 4 seconds before taking a new breath.

## Coping Skills



- **Connection with social supports**  
Social support is considered to be a pertinent factor in the post-traumatic recovery period. Therefore, providers of psychological first aid may take up a series of activities to mobilise the already existing social support mechanisms of individuals affected by an event.
- **Guiding to and informing about the resources/institutions where help can be obtained.**

# BASIC PH Model (Lahad, 1993)

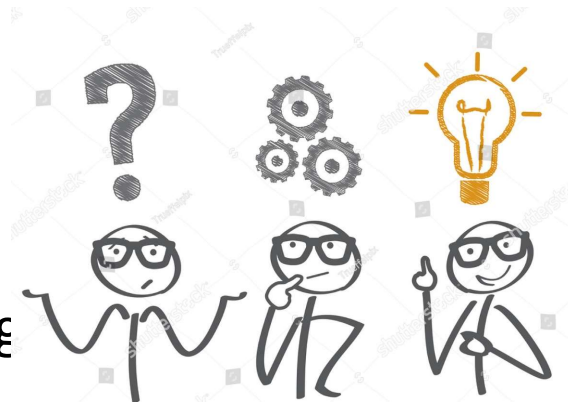
The model suggests that we are each able to possess **six potential characteristics** that each represent a different style of coping, and that the more of these styles we are able to utilize, the more resilience we are able to harness in order to regain a sense of control in an otherwise terrifying situation.

- **Belief**: This can be through faith or any other shared beliefs and relies on inner core values.
- **Affect**: Expressing feelings and emotions.
- **Social**: Via support-seeking through friendships or organizations we can gain a sense of responsibility within a group which can help us to stay grounded.
- **Imagination**: Expression of thoughts and feelings in a creative manner can allow a safer feeling release of expression through art, writing, drama or music.
- **Cognitive**: Getting information
- **Physical**: Sports, dance, movement

- Improving Problem Solving Skills

- Identify and define the problem.
- Come up with possible solutions.
- Evaluate the options.
- Choose the best solution.
- Implement the solution.
- Evaluate the outcome.

- Encouraging positive and/or daily routine activities





- Informing people about the importance of self-care.
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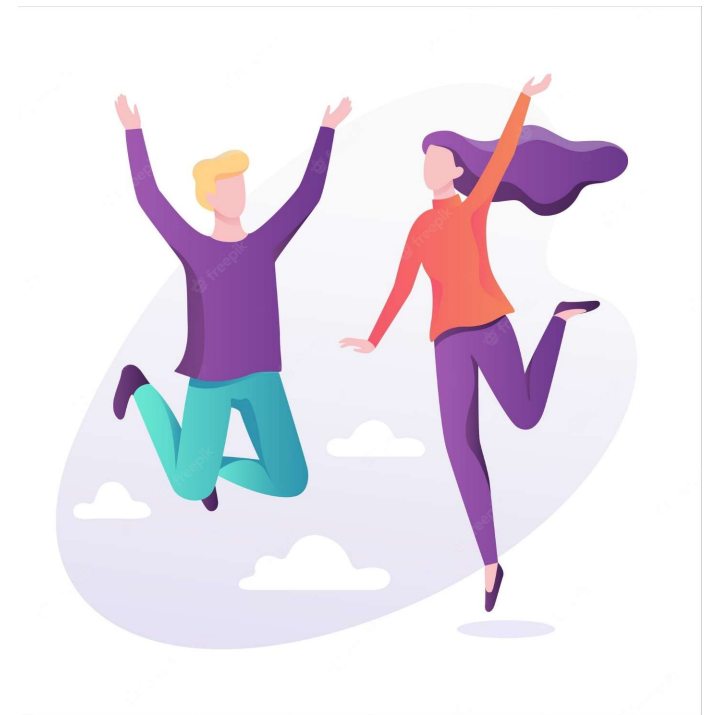
- Developing the ability to manage reactions:
  - Identifying the stress reaction and reminders/triggers.
  - To exemplify/remind the forms of expression with meditation, writing-speech against stressful factors.
  - Establishing a referral plan to a mental health or health professional in case of personal reactions.



# Well-Being

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Well-being is the experience of health, [happiness](#), and prosperity. It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of meaning or purpose, and the [ability to manage stress](#).



# Maintaining Well Being

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- Take care of your physical health (exercise, eat healthy, sleep well).
- Spend time with the ones you love.
- Take time out for yourself.
- Try expressing your experiences with different tools such as writing and drawing.
- Take a break from social media.



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- All of your early intervention methods, psychological first aid, coping strategies, and efforts to restore well-being may not be enough.
- In this case, seek expert support from the nearest mental health professional possible.

In acute situations;

- It is normal to have such mental-physical reactions to an abnormal event.
- The symptoms mentioned may last between 20-30 days.
- If the symptoms continue more than a month and so and continues to effect the person's daily life, then a professional help should be sought.

# What is Normalization?

- In cases where a traumatic situation or a crisis is faced, the normalization process begins with the provision of basic needs and security.
- The normalization process does not mean getting used to or moving on as if nothing happened.
- It is necessary for the person(s) to become homeostasis, both physical and spiritual, after the situations they have been through, in order to continue living.



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