# Psychological First Aid

## TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is designed to help reduce distress among community members (i.e., children, adolescents, adults, and families) affected by a disaster, terrorist event, or other emergency.

## SUMMARY

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is delivered by mental health professionals or disaster relief workers who provide early services in an emergency event. Goals of the program include establishing a human connection with those affected, ensuring safety, connecting victims and support networks, and providing accurate and current information.

## EVIDENCE

To date, there are no evaluations focused on outcomes for those served by the program. Initial process evaluations suggest that those who implement the program are satisfied with the training materials. However, without data on outcomes, conclusions cannot be drawn regarding the effects of the program on those who experience a disaster, terrorist event, or other emergency.

## COMPONENTS

PFA is administered immediately following an emergency situation. The program includes eight basic components:

- **Contact and engagement**: Establishing a human connection with those being served;
- **Safety and comfort**: Ensuring the immediate safety and comfort of those affected;
- **Stabilization**: Calming distraught survivors;
- **Information gathering**: Identifying and expressing survivors’ specific needs;
- **Practical assistance**: Helping survivors meet their immediate needs;
- **Connections with social supports**: Identifying and making connections with sources of support, including family members, friends, and community resources;
- **Information on coping**: Identifying ways to help victims with the psychological impact of disasters or emergencies; and
- **Linkage with collaborative services**: Transitioning survivors to local services such as medical or mental health clinics, social support programs, or transportation services, as needed.

## PREVIOUS USE

PFA has been administered in the United States, Haiti, Norway, Japan, China, Italy, Spain, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.
Psychological First Aid

TRAINING
Training is available through a free six-hour interactive online course. Please visit http://learn.nctsn.org/course/category.php?id=11 for more information on training.

CONSIDERATIONS
Some considerations associated with implementing PFA include obtaining the volunteers (i.e., mental health professionals and disaster relief workers) to provide services during an emergency event and providing transportation, housing, and on-site support for volunteer service providers.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185, or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION
If you are interested in implementing PFA, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185, or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

TIME
This program is administered immediately following an emergency situation.

COST
There are no costs for program materials; however, costs may be associated with transportation, housing, and support of volunteers.

EVALUATION PLAN
To move PFA to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one evaluation should be performed demonstrating positive effects lasting at least one year from the beginning of the program or at least six months from program completion.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185, or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT
Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program. Phone: 1-877-382-9185 or by email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact Melissa Brymer at mbrymer@mednet.ucla.edu or visit http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid

SOURCE
http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid

www.militaryfamilies.psu.edu