

RESPONDER PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID (PFA)  
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

–Action Step	Goal	Key Activities to Perform	Things to Consider and Sample Questions to Ask
<b>1. Contact and Engagement</b>	To respond to contacts initiated by affected persons, or initiate contacts in a non-intrusive, compassionate, and helpful manner.	Respond to or initiate contact with the responder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce yourself (if you do not know the responder)</li> <li>• Ask the responder for permission to speak with them</li> <li>• Explain that you are there to see if you can help</li> <li>• Identify any barriers or limitations to communication</li> <li>• Employ behaviors to effectively communicate with the responder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you do not know the responder: <i>‘Hello, my name is _____, I work with _____. I am checking with people to see how they are doing and if I can help them in any way. Is it ok if I talk with you for a few minutes?’</i></li> </ul>
<b>2. Safety and Comfort</b>	To enhance immediate and ongoing safety, and provide physical and emotional comfort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify hazards, dangers, obstacles and barriers</li> <li>• Ensure that the responder is safe</li> <li>• Direct any concerns for safety to the Safety Officer or their Deputy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be alert to possible tunnel vision and avoid it.</li> <li>• Maintain situational awareness.</li> <li>• <i>‘Are you thirsty? Would you like a bottle of water?’</i></li> <li>• <i>‘Are you hungry? Would you like some food?’</i></li> </ul>
<b>3. Stabilization (if needed)</b>	To calm and orient emotionally-overwhelmed/distraught responder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calm and orient (if necessary) the overwhelmed or disoriented responder</li> <li>• Provide physical and emotional comfort to the responder (look for simple ways to make the physical environment more comfortable)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there responders that are experiencing signs of physical or behavioral distress and require immediate attention?</li> <li>• What immediate stabilization or stress reduction technique would be most beneficial for this / these responder(s)?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Information Gathering: Current Needs and Concerns</b>	To identify immediate needs and concerns, gather additional information, and tailor Psychological First Aid interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify immediate needs and current concerns</li> <li>• Gather information about the responder’s ability to adaptively cope with previous critical incident stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the responder displaying signs of functional impairment?</li> <li>• What are the responder’s most immediate and primary needs and current concerns?</li> <li>• <i>‘Have you ever experienced these kinds of feelings or reactions before?’</i></li> </ul>

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<b>5. Practical Assistance</b>	To offer practical help to the responder in addressing immediate needs and concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the information gathered to tailor interventions based on the responder's needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What services or resources are needed by, appropriate for, and available to the responder?</li> <li><i>'Is there anything that I can do to assist you in meeting any of your immediate needs, current concerns, pressing problems, or challenges?'</i></li> </ul>
<b>6. Connections with Social Supports</b>	To help establish brief or ongoing contacts with primary support persons or other sources of support, including family members, friends, and community helping resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate interactions with family members, friends, and community helping resources (i.e.: provide coverage while the responder contacts support persons)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>'Would you like to take a break and call _____?'</i></li> <li>Refer for further evaluation or higher level of care (if indicated)</li> <li><i>'Is it ok if I introduce you to someone that is better able to help you?'</i></li> </ul>
<b>7. Information on Coping</b>	To provide information (about stress reactions and coping) to reduce distress and promote adaptive functioning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the responder with information about stress reactions and coping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The reactions that you are experiencing are common. Many responders that go through an incident like this experience _____.'</i></li> <li><i>'If you want, I can give you some information on _____ that may help you feel better.'</i></li> </ul>
<b>8. Linkage to Collaborative Services</b>	To inform and link the responder with available services needed at the time or in the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link the responder with available services that are needed and available at this time or in the future</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>'Would you like me to tell you about some resources that are available that you can use if you choose to?'</i></li> </ul>