



A Guide to Basic Psychological First Aid

January 2019

Terror attacks can expose people and community to uncertainty and stress. Emotional distress might arise during or immediately after an attack, even if you are not a direct victim of the attack. In the days that follow, some people may feel confused, distressed, fearful and numb. Do you know that basic psychological first aid can be easily administered to help our family, friends and colleagues who are affected in the aftermath of an attack?

You can help by picking up some basic psychological first aid skills.



What is Psychological First Aid (PFA)?

It is a humane, supportive and practical first response given to people or persons in emotional distress during or immediately after a crisis.

- Calming and comforting affected persons
- Understanding their needs and concerns, and respond accordingly \Diamond
- Helping people access information and services \Diamond
- Protecting affected persons from any further harm
- Providing practical support \Diamond

The following points can guide you in administering PFA when necessary.



Psychological First Aid — A.S.A.P.





Attentive

- Eye contact
- Paraphrase, summarise, clarify
- Respect privacy and ensure confidentiality
 - Show your interest, attention and care



Stay Close • Being available and present

- Build rapport and trust
- Show empathy and connect
- Appropriate physical contact

Personal space

Inform affected persons where they may find you



Accept stories

- Accept rejection of help, if person needs space
 - Accept expressed emotions/silence
- Respect their reactions and coping strategies Adopt a non-judgemental approach

Be aware of and set aside your own biases and

- prejudices
- Be patient and calm Acknowledge how they are feeling, and any losses or important events they share with you



Connect them to loved ones, community Refer them to professional help

Provide Practical Help

- Provide factual information IF you have it
- understand keep it simple
- decisions • Make it clear to people that even if they refuse help
 - Source: Singapore Red Cross Academy

now, they can still have access to help in the future

Common Signs of Stress include:

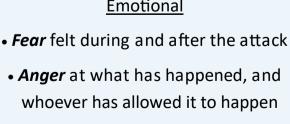


- Headaches
- Backaches
- Breathing difficulties
- Sleep disturbances

Rapid heartbeat

• Diarrhoea

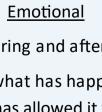
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- Sadness for injuries, death and loss
- Shame for being helpless, or for not
- did not do enough



- Facilitate access to basic needs
- Be honest about what you know and don't know
- Give information at an appropriate time Give information in a way that the person may
- Respect a person's right to make their own



- that occurred
- having reacted as one should have
- Guilt for surviving, or because you



- Loss of sense of reality
- Flashbacks of incident
- Easily irritated Inability to feel positive
- Recurring thoughts of trauma Sense of loss

SGSecure@Workplaces Bulletin

Source: MHA

www.sgsecure.sg/docs/default-source/default-document-library/coping-with-crisis final.pdf.

For more information on coping with crises, you may refer to