



SURO & EVBH Continuing Education Series

Psychological First Aid Juliet Madsen, MA

September 14, 2023 | 9:00–3:00 PM MST | Gypsum Recreation Center
Intermediate Audience | FREE- Register Today | Six (6) CE

Abstract:

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is an evidence-informed modular approach to help children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of disaster and terrorism. Individuals affected by a disaster or traumatic incident, whether survivors, witnesses, or responders to such events, may struggle with or face new challenges following the event. *PFA* was developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the National Center for PTSD, with contributions from individuals involved in disaster research and response.

PFA is designed to reduce the initial distress caused by traumatic events and to foster short- and long-term adaptive functioning and coping. *PFA* does not assume that all survivors will develop severe mental health problems or long-term difficulties in recovery. Instead, it is based on an understanding that disaster survivors and others affected by such events will experience a broad range of early reactions (e.g., physical, psychological, behavioral, spiritual). Some of these reactions will cause enough distress to interfere with adaptive coping, and recovery may be helped by support from compassionate and caring disaster responders.

PFA core actions constitute the basic objectives of providing early assistance within days or weeks following an event. Providers should be flexible, and base the amount of time they spend on each core action on the survivors' specific needs and concerns. The core skills are designed to be helpful in addressing the survivors' and responders' needs and concerns. *PFA* is designed for delivery in diverse settings. Mental health and other disaster response workers may be called upon to provide *Psychological First Aid* in general population shelters, special needs shelters, field hospitals and medical triage areas, acute care facilities (e.g., Emergency Departments), staging areas or respite centers for first responders or other relief workers, emergency operations centers, crisis hotlines or phone banks, feeding locations, disaster assistance service centers, family reception and assistance centers, homes, businesses, and other community settings.



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The eight PFA Core Actions include:

- **Contact and Engagement:** To respond to contacts initiated by survivors, or to initiate contacts in a non-intrusive, compassionate, and helpful manner.
- **Safety and Comfort:** To enhance immediate and ongoing safety, and provide physical and emotional comfort.
- **Stabilization (if needed):** To calm and orient emotionally overwhelmed or disoriented survivors.
- **Information Gathering on Current Needs and Concerns:** To identify immediate needs and concerns, gather additional information, and tailor Psychological First Aid interventions.
- **Practical Assistance:** To offer practical help to survivors in addressing immediate needs and concerns.
- **Connection with Social Supports:** To help establish brief or ongoing contacts with primary support persons and other sources of support, including family members, friends, and community helping resources.
- **Information on Coping:** To provide information about stress reactions and coping to reduce distress and promote adaptive functioning.
- **Linkage with Collaborative Services:** To link survivors with available services needed at the time or in the future.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this session, participants should be able to:

1. Understand what is the Stress Response. (Biological Responses to Stress)
2. Utilize the PFA as part of Disaster Behavioral Health.
3. Apply the five Psychological First Aid principles
4. Identify the core actions of Psychological First Aid in relation to my licensure.
5. Demonstrate emotional Intelligence as it pertains to PFA.
6. Assess certain special considerations within PFA and its application.
7. Practice respecting limitations.
8. Demonstrate the PFA through case examples.



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Citations:

1. Pause-Reset-Nourish (PRN) to Promote Wellbeing: Use As Needed to Care for Your Wellness! (2020) (PDF)

<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/prn-to-promote-wellbeing-as-needed-to-care-for-your-wellness>

Provides information about the specific self-care strategy of Pause-Reset-Nourish, or PRN. This fact sheet acknowledges the levels of stress that professionals may be currently experiencing and offers a way to address unwanted symptoms and promote and replenish wellbeing and enhance resilience.

2. Additional NCTSN Secondary Traumatic Stress Resources

<https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/secondary-traumatic-stress>

3. Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STS; Bride)

<https://theacademy.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/STSSwithscoreinterpretation.pdf> 17-item measure for STS

4. Low Impact Debriefing (Tend Academy)

<https://www.tendacademy.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/low-impact-2-pager.pdf>

5. <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/psychological-first-aid-and-skills-for-psychological-recovery/about-pfa>

Agenda:

9:00-9:30 AM: Module 1: Psychological First Aid (PFA) Overview

9:30-10:00 AM: Module 2: The Stress Response and Your Brain

10:00-10:45 AM: Module 3: The Four Fear Responses (Friend, Fight, Flight, Freeze)

10:45-11:30 AM: Module 4: PFA Core Principles

11:30-12:15 PM: Module 5: PFA: Emotional Intelligence

12:15-1:00 PM: Module 6: PFA Core Actions

1:00-1:45 PM: Module 7: Discussion: Respect Limitation & Where do we go from here?

1:45-2:30 PM: Module 7: Case Example



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2:30-3:00 PM: Module 8: Provider Well-being

Presenter Bio:

Juliet Madsen is a retired U.S. Army veteran and former paramedic who received her master's in disaster psychology from the University of Denver and has experience working with international, federal, state, and local task forces in response to emergencies and disasters. Juliet has twenty-eight years of emergency management service experience and has worked as an international disaster clinical trauma counselor, Juliet has a strong background in emergency medicine and research. She has been on the Board of Directors of a national veteran non-profit and has traveled the country speaking about veterans and women in the military. Juliet has taught numerous subjects from *Geriatric Emergency Services*, *Emergency Medicine courses* to Disaster Management courses and *Current Trends in Clinical Psychology* since 2002. She was first published in 2011. Most recently, Juliet has been working for the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response where she has responded to disasters such as COVID-19, the Marshall Fire, the Club-Q Shooting and where she has responded to the needs of healthcare workers as she assisted with the ramp up and strategic planning of the Healthcare Worker Resilience and Retention Initiative (HCW R&R). Through both the COVID-19 Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) and the HCW R&R initiative and her own experiences as a paramedic and military member Juliet has worked to help families and individuals work through the immediate and long-term results of emergencies and disasters. She understands the needs of community members when it comes to both the medical and mental health concerns and their challenges.



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