

Psychological First Aid – What to Do

1. Make a Connection

- a. Introduce yourself.
- b. Be fully present.

2. Be Kind, Calm, and Compassionate

- a. Express patience and compassion, even if people are being difficult.
- b. Speak in a calm voice.
- c. Remain courteous and respectful of people.
- d. Pay attention to cultural appropriateness of physical proximity, eye contact, and gestures

3. Meet People's Basic Needs

- a. Offer or direct them to food and water.
- b. Provide or direct them to a safe place.
- c. Check to see if family, friends, or peers are available.
- d. Encourage them to promote their self-care such as getting sleep, rest, and nutrition.
(e.g. take a break, moderate exercise)
- e. Guide them to the next level of care as needed.

4. Listening

- a. Be attentive.
- b. Tune in to where the person is.
- c. Observe body language for cues.
- d. Listen carefully.
- e. Reflect back what the person is saying so that they know you are truly hearing them.
- f. Be available.

5. Give Realistic Reassurance

- a. Help the person to feel less anxious or worried by letting them know that what they are feelings is understandable.
- b. Do NOT promise what you cannot deliver.

6. Encourage Good Coping Skills

7. Help People Connect

- a. Get them access to a phone so that they can contact their loved ones.
- b. Suggest additional methods of communication such as texting and/or email.
- c. Guide the person to the appropriate sources or resources for information in your setting including where and how to make a referral.

8. Ending the Conversation

- a. Ask if there is anything else you can to assist her or him.
- b. Provide the person with phone numbers, handouts, and or relevant contact information of additional resources for follow-up and possible referral to next level of care.