

Psychological First Aid: Addressing Mental Health Distress During Disasters

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SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

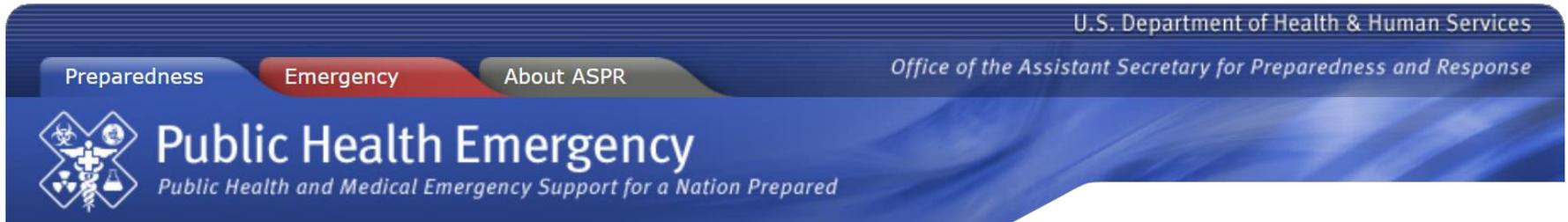
Overview

- Disaster Behavioral Health
- What is Psychological First Aid (PFA)?
- How does that differ from Mental Health First Aid?
- Other resources to know



SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

Disaster Behavioral Health (DBH)



“DBH addresses the psychological, emotional, cognitive, developmental, and social impacts that disasters have on survivors and responders as they respond and recover.”

— Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response,

<https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Pages/DBH-federal.aspx>

Disaster Behavioral Health Services

- ❖ DBH offers a set of supportive, short- and intermediate-term behavioral health interventions that address survivors' emotional responses to a natural or human-caused disaster or traumatic event.
- ❖ Interventions include providing a supportive presence as well as monitoring and assessing mental health and substance abuse needs.
- ❖ DBH also provides information and referrals as an integral service to the affected community.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

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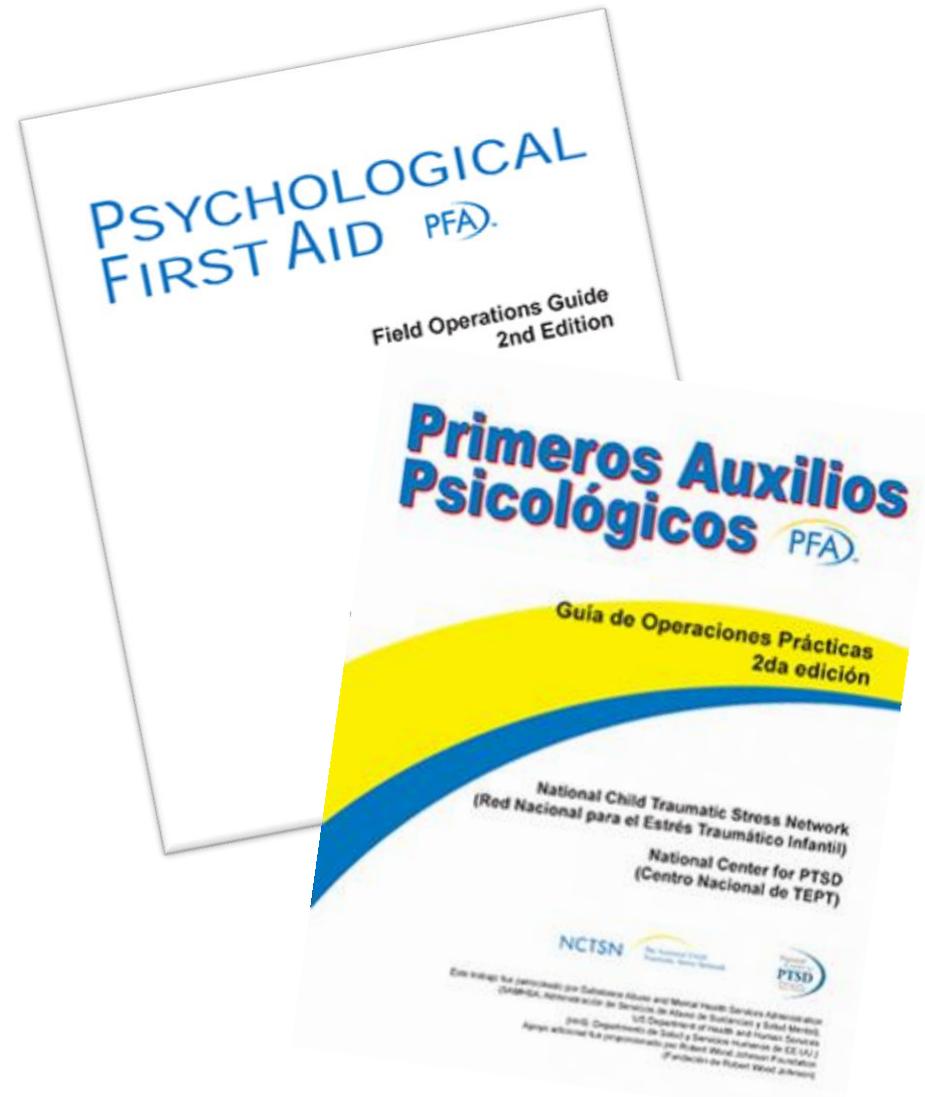
<https://store.samhsa.gov>



Visit bit.ly/disasterapp to learn more.

What is Psychological First Aid (PFA)?

An evidence-informed modular approach to help children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of disaster and terrorism.



Psychological First Aid (PFA)

- Can be provided by mental health and other disaster response workers
- Available in a variety of languages
- Delivered in nearly every response environment imaginable
- Training for PFA can be found in both in-person and online formats

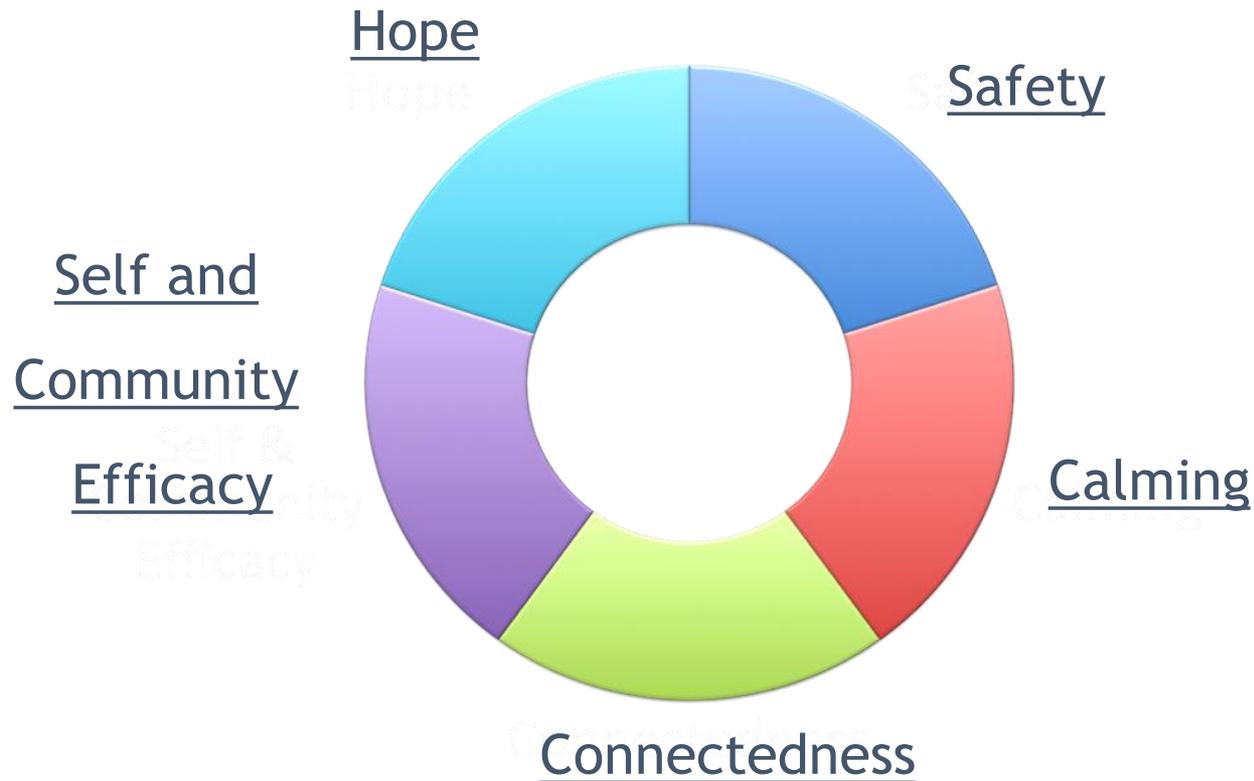


<https://learn.nctsn.org/enrol/index.php?id=38>

Psychological First Aid (PFA)

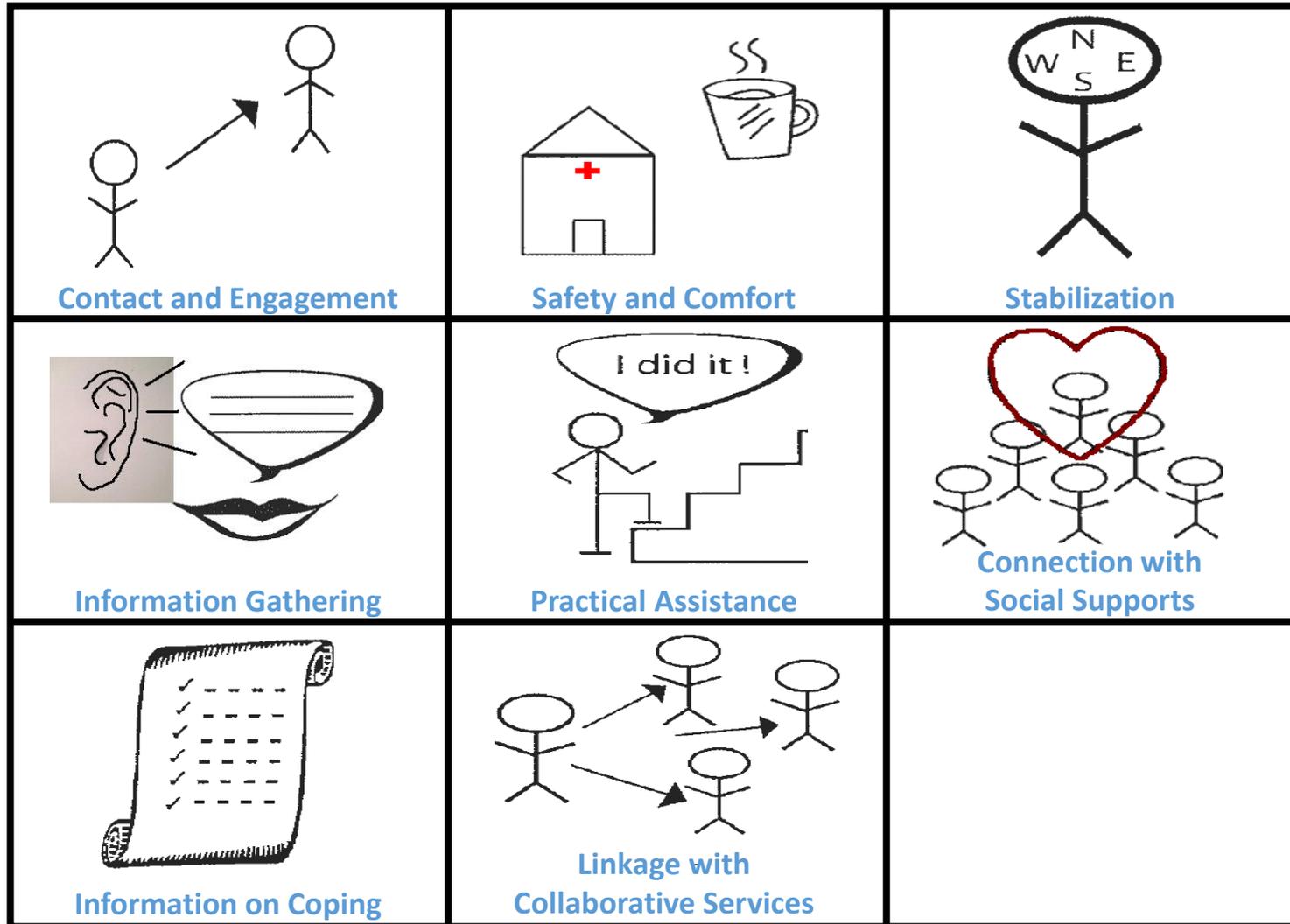
- Tailored PFA programs exist to address unique cultural or population-specific aspects of delivery, including the following:
 - PFA for Schools (PFA-S)
 - PFA Guide for Community Religious Professionals
 - PFA during Ebola virus disease outbreaks
- Composed of modular tools
- All deliveries should be appropriate for all developmental levels, culturally informed, applicable in field settings, and consistent with research on risk and resilience following trauma

Five Empirically-Supported Early Intervention Principles

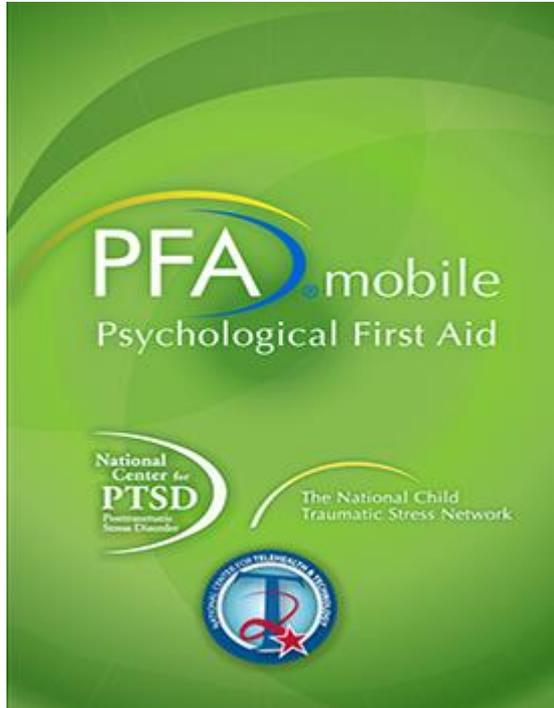


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Eight Core Actions



PFA Mobile App



Available in iOS and Android at
[https://www.nctsn.org/resources/
pfa-mobile](https://www.nctsn.org/resources/pfa-mobile)

PFA Mobile[™] supplements other resources that trained individuals utilize before, during, and after a disaster response.

- Lets responders review PFA guidelines and assess their readiness to deliver PFA in the field.

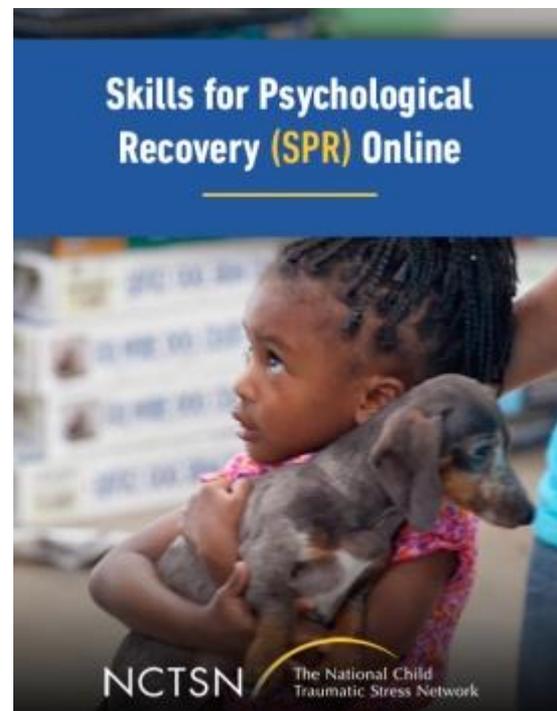
What is Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)?

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>

- Mental Health First Aid is a skills-based training course that teaches participants about mental health and substance-use issues.
 - The training gives you the skills you need to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem or experiencing a crisis.

Skills for Psychological Recover (SPR)

- Aims to help survivors gain skills to manage distress and cope with post-disaster stress and adversity.
- Utilizes skills-building components from mental health treatment that have been found helpful in a variety of post-trauma situations.



<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/skills-psychological-recovery-spr-online>

Thank You

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Disaster Technical Assistance Center

1-800-308-3515

dtac@samhsa.hhs.gov

www.samhsa.gov

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) • 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)

References

Adapted from “Disaster and Crisis Early Intervention: Psychological First Aid Plus” from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response.

American Psychological Association. (2018). *The road to resilience*. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/road-resilience.aspx>

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Hobfoll, Watson, Bell, Bryant, Brymer, Friedman, Friedman, Gersons, de Jong, Layne, Maguen, Neria, Norwood, Pynoos, Reissman, Ruzek, Shalev, Solomon, Steinberg, & Ursano (2007). Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence. *Psychiatry*, 70(4), pp 283 – 315.

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