

Providing Emotional Support to Others

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is an evidence-informed approach that is built on the concept of human resilience. It aims to reduce stress symptoms and assist in a healthy recovery following a traumatic event, natural disaster, public health emergency, or even a personal crisis.

4 Steps to Providing Psychological First Aid

1. Prepare



- Set the right environment
- Ground yourself
- Think about the tone of the call

Make it a goal that you will speak less, and listen more.

2. Build trust



- Reassure a ‘just between us’ conversation and follow through
- Identify what the person needs (ex. Information, counsel, solution, etc.)

Not everyone wants the same thing, not every person even wants you to ‘solve’ their problems.

3. Listen actively



- Learn to paraphrase and affirm the other person
- Use short encouraging phrases
- Respond appropriately with reassurance for the other person to feel safe

Demonstrate you’re paying attention so the other person feels seen, heard, and valued.

4. Provide information



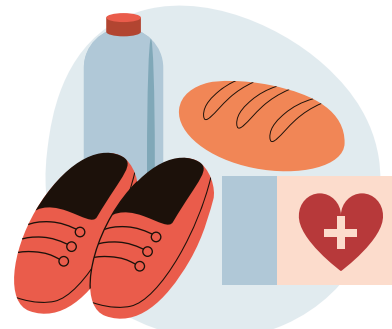
- Don’t take things personally
- Focus on the cause
- Respond without defensiveness and de-escalate
- Advise, don’t control

Information allows the person to make informed choices about their well-being.

Follow these guidelines to help someone in distress:



1. Assess needs and concerns



2. Help with basic needs



3. Comfort them and help them feel calm



4. Provide practical care and support



5. Listen, but don't pressure them to talk



6. Protect people from further harm



7. Connect them to information, services and social support