

Psychological First Aid

Psychological First Aid is a helpful strategy that is employed after the occurrence of a critical incident such as war, natural calamities, accidents, loss of a loved one among other traumas. It consists of assisting and supporting someone by giving basic help, attending to them, soothing them and providing protection while maintaining a person's self-respect and dignity. Rather than the practice of psychotherapy where patients are evaluated and treated for their psychopathologies, PFA is employment oriented. It helps people cope with the immediate psychological stress and creates a safe atmosphere for some support as well.

Five Steps to provide Psychological First Aid:

- Information
- Safety
- Basic Needs
- Extended Staff
- Identification of persons who are emotionally overwhelmed

Key Elements of Psychological First Aid

Protection & Reassurance

They must feel secure and comforted, before they set out to tackle the initial negative impact. One of the primary objectives of PFA is to help those affected feel safe once again through active or passive measures. This can involve taking them to a safe place, giving them time to recuperate or simply soothing them in a calm manner.

Hear and Appreciate

PFA lets people talk, insisting only that they communicate about their feelings and experiences. In the situation of PFA, it is always important to have a person who will listen and in such a case, such attributes are of great responsibility. It is important to ensure that the person is not judged and all efforts are made to understand them instead.

Relationship and Access

Trauma may be such a profound experience that a person isolates herself/himself from other people, from friends and family, or even from her/his feelings. PFA modality is about empowering people with the means to help themselves. It could mean bringing them back in touch with their families or linking them to self-help networks and resources.

Adaptation and Recovery

PFA target is therefore prioritizing actions that enable this person to positively cope with the circumstances. Such actions could be suggested should help feel better including valuing important requests in improving a person's mental and emotional state.

Who can offer PFA?

Psychological First Aid, in contrast to many other mental health approaches that are confined to specialists, is a lay exercise in nature. Although mental professionals are usually at the forefront of most such activities, trained volunteers, first responders, community champions and even family and friends can provide PFA when educated on the fundamental tenets.

However, the APA as well as the WHO, and similar organizations, also recommend level of education of the PFA providers when applied to disasters or other critical incidents. I believe the training assures that care is given positively, above standard practices and does not inflict any more misery on those who are already stressed and in need of help.

Conclusion

Psychological First Aid is not only a collection of techniques, but also a gentle willingness to help those suffering from emotional distress. PFA therefore seeks to create strategies that can help risk populations. PFA is such a technique that offers immediate help, relief, practical support, and aids people in getting back on their feet and begins the process of getting healed in all aspects. Whether provided by health care professionals or laypersons, the emphasis on human feelings through connections and care renders it an important response measure during crises.

Considering that the provision of PFA is crucial, and more so its complementarily in devising emergency response measures will assist in averting further psychological harm and damage.