Additional Activities

Contents

[Icebreakers 2](#_Toc348086122)

[Introduction 3](#_Toc348086123)

[Referrals 4](#_Toc348086124)

[Active listening 5](#_Toc348086125)

[Significant life events 11](#_Toc348086126)

[Managing stress 13](#_Toc348086127)

[Distress 15](#_Toc348086128)

[Coping 16](#_Toc348086129)

[Grief 18](#_Toc348086130)

[Psychological First Aid 19](#_Toc348086131)

# Icebreakers

**Unique characteristics (5-10 min)**

Divide the group into pairs and give participants a few minutes to interview each other about their lives and interests. Gather the entire group and let each participant introduce their partner by name and share at least two unique characteristics about them.

**Your favourite things (5-10 min)**

Divide the group into pairs and ask participants to tell each other their favourite food or name the animal they feel best describes them and why. This information is subsequently shared with the group when participants introduce their partners.

**Ball toss (5-10 min)**

Form a circle with participants and toss a soft ball around the circle. Participants state their name as they catch the ball. After a few minutes, when catching the ball, ask them to call out the name of the person who tossed the ball to them. This activity can also be used throughout the course by substituting a quick information exchange for names. For example, the trainer may ask, “What are the guiding principles for a successful psychosocial support programme?” or “What are the seven principles of the Movement?” The ball is tossed around the circle and participants call out an answer as they catch the ball.

**Nametags (5-10 min)**

Prepare a nametag for each participant and place the nametags in a box. Each participant picks a nametag from the box. Participants locate the person whose nametag they drew and introduce themselves. This is especially useful for larger groups of 20 or more.

**Fact or fiction (5-10 min)**

Ask each person to write down four statements about themselves, one of which is not true. Each person takes turns reading their list aloud and the rest of the group writes down the one they think is not true. When all are done reading the lists aloud, the first person reads their list again and identifies the statement which is not true. The group should compare their written responses with the correct answers.

**The magic wand (5-10 min)**

Ask the participants what they would do if they just found a magic wand that allowed them to change three things. How would they change themselves, their job, their home, an important project, etc.? This activity helps the group to learn about others’ desires and frustrations.

**More icebreakers can be found at Reproline – Reproductive Health Online, an affiliate of John Hopkins University:** [**http://www.reproline.jhu.edu/index.htm**](http://www.reproline.jhu.edu/index.htm)**l.**

# Introduction

***Activity 1: Motivation & Expectations (40 min)***

**Purpose:**To make the lay counsellors reflect on their motivation for and expectations of the volunteer work they are doing.

**Procedure:**

Ask participants to pick a partner and discuss together the following questions:

* My motivation: what has drawn me to work as a lay counsellor?
* What do I expect to give to others in my work?
* What do I hope to get from doing this work?

You can display the questions on a power point or write the questions on a flip chart.

**Discussion questions:**

For the discussion, bring the participants back together and ask what they learned about their partner’s motivation and hopes in working as a lay counsellor. Write down brief responses for each question on a flip chart and notice where there are similarities (and differences) among the group.

**Wrap up points:**You can wrap up this activity by explaining that it is helpful for each lay counsellor to examine their motivations and expectations for the role they are taking on, as these have implications for how they will approach their work, how they feel about it, and how they care for themselves.

# Referrals

***Activity 1: Case examples***

***Case example A:***

Clara, a 46-year-old woman, comes to see you because of her daughter Nancy, who is 16. She tells you that her daughter has not been to school for several weeks. Normally a very lively and social girl, Nancy has recently completely withdrawn from her mother as well as from most of her friends. Two days ago Clara found cuts on her daughter’s arm and now she thinks it is time to seek help. She wants you to tell her how to convince her daughter to stop her self-destructive behaviour, and cannot understand why you cannot solve this problem for her.

**Discussion questions:**

* *What can you tell the mother?*
* *Which questions would you ask?*
* *Where would you refer the mother and her daughter?*
* *How would you try to convince the mother to see a specialist?*

***Case example B:***

A 16-year old girl tells you that she has not been to school for several weeks. She is normally very active and social but has recently withdrawn herself from family and friends and is now spending most of her time alone in her room. She feels very different from others and has started to cut herself, even though she knows that it is not normal behaviour. She confides in you because she thinks you can help her and make her stop cutting herself.

**Discussion questions:**

* *What are you going to tell the girl?*
* *What questions are you going to ask?*
* *Who can you refer her to?*
* *How will you convince her to seek professional help?*

***Case example C: Trauma***

Anne, a 24-year-old woman calls your service. She begins to talk about the death of her friend three days earlier. The friend had spent the night in her guest room, and when Anne came to wake him in the morning, she realized that he was dead. She shows severe stress reactions, is not able to sleep, relives the visual memory of his lifeless body on her guest bed, and does not want to go into her guest room any more.

**Discussion questions:**

* *Which stress reactions do you recognize?*
* *What can you tell her about good ways of coping?*
* *What kind of questions do you ask in order to find out if she needs to see a professional?*

# Active listening

***Activity 1: Active listening (30 min)***

**Purpose:**

To understand and train active listening

**Procedure:**

Ask people to pair up and decide who will be listener/speaker first. Ask speakers to explore this topic for seven minutes:

*“How do you feel about the way you respond to people affected by a critical situation? Which of your life experiences have been relevant? What do you think you do that is helpful/un-helpful?”*

Ask listeners to give 100 per cent of their attention to what the speaker is saying, and allow the speaker to explore the topic in their own way – rather than ‘interviewing’ them. Instruct listeners to avoid asking questions, giving opinions, arguing or sympathizing.

After seven minutes, call time, and help people switch roles by getting them to swap chairs. Repeat.

Spend the remaining time on a group discussion.

**Discussion points:**

The following sorts of questions can serve to prompt discussion about -- and learning from -- the exercise:

* How was it different from everyday conversation?
* How did you feel when there were silences?
* Where you more comfortable as the speaker or the listener?
* What percentage of your attention were you able to give the speaker? What percentage do you usually give to people you are supporting?
* What stops you giving 100 per cent of your attention?
* What is hardest for you about responding to people affected by crisis-support situations?

**Wrap up points:**

Wrap up by repeating the core elements in active listening, and emphasize that it is a method to be used in communicating with those seeking help.

***Activity 2: Active listening when dealing with patients (60 min)***

**Purpose:**

This exercise provides an opportunity for participants to practice taking turns listening. It is important that those who work with people affected by disease have a high level of self-awareness about their own vulnerabilities. The topic suggested below serves as an introduction and warm-up to a discussion about what people affected by disease need from supporters, and what skills and personal qualities are helpful in support situations.

**Procedure:**

Tell the group that the exercise will give them the opportunity to practice ‘one-way’ listening. Ask them to divide into groups of three, and decide who will be speaker, listener and observer first.

1. Ask the speakers to use 10 minutes to explore this topic:

*Think back to times in your life when you have had difficulties and needed help. What sort of help did you want? What sort of people have you turned to (parents, partner, friends, neighbours, professionals)? What personal qualities did these people have? What was their attitude toward you? What did they say or do that helped?*

1. Ask listeners to give 100 per cent of their attention to what the speaker is saying, and to avoid asking questions, giving opinions, arguing or sympathizing.
2. Ask the observers to give listeners feedback about their listening skills. Tell them to make sure they describe the listener’s posture, gestures, eye contact, tone of voice, facial expression and quality of listening, and do not lapse into discussing the problem or becoming negative or critical of the listener.

Help people switch roles by getting them to swap chairs. Repeat until everyone has had a chance to play all three roles.

**Discussion questions:**

Ask each group to produce a jointly agreed-upon list of the ten qualities or skills that were most important in the people they turned to. Display ¨Important characteristics” flipcharts. Ask people to share some of what they talked about in the groups. Ask questions to prompt discussion.

* Which of the “important characteristics” are skills which can be developed?
* How easy is it to ask for help and receive it?
* How are people affected by a particular crisis situation different from you?
* What do they have in common with you?
* What do they need from you?
* How well do you provide it?
* What skills do you need to develop further?

In emotionally difficult situations, it is more likely that people will be chosen as good to turn to if they are:

* trustworthy
* appearing genuinely interested
* prepared to listen carefully and make themselves available.

Turning to an expert who offers information or advice about what to do will most likely be of secondary importance. This may come as a surprise to the group, as people often worry about whether they are ‘doing enough’.

**Wrap up**

##### ***Activity 3: Don’ts when listening (20 min)***

**Purpose:**

To develop awareness about the sorts of attitudes and behaviours to avoid when listening

**Procedure:**

Ask the group to brainstorm all the things they can think of which are *unhelpful* for a listener to say or do in support situations. Write up on a flipchart. The list will probably include things like continually looking at your watch, interrupting, being unsympathetic, constantly asking questions, taking over and talking about yourself, fiddling and twiddling, raising your eyebrows, gazing out the window.

*Ask people to pair up and take turns being speaker and listener. Ask the speaker to talk about their last holiday for five minutes. Ask the listeners to say and do as many of the unhelpful things written up on the flipchart as they possibly can in five minutes.*

*After five minutes, call time, and help people switch roles by getting them to swap chairs. Repeat.*

**Discussion questions:**

Use the following questions to prompt discussion:

*“Have you experienced this sort of listening in ‘real life’? How were you left feeling as the speaker? What do you tend to say or do which may be unhelpful?”* **Wrap up points:**

This activity should help raise participants’ awareness of their behaviour towards help-seekers by experiencing it themselves, and how distracting different kinds of behaviours can be. It is therefore important as a lay counsellor to avoid the behaviours demonstrated in the activity.

***Activity 4: Listening patterns (30 min)***

**Purpose:**

To get participants to examine elements of their lives that may have had an effect on their present listening patterns.

**Procedure:**

Using the following questions, ask people to work individually for ten minutes, thinking about how they learned to listen, their early relationships, and how these elements relate to support relationships:

1. How did your parent(s) or guardian(s) listen to you when you were young?
   * With complete attention
   * Reluctantly
   * Showed little interest
   * With divided attention
   * Interrogated me
   * Interrupted me
   * Other
2. What rules -- spoken or unspoken -- existed in your family? These might include:
   * You mustn’t show off
   * You mustn’t be angry
   * You must be considerate to others
   * Other

**Discussion questions:**

Allow those in the group who wish to share to do so.

About EXERCISE A:

When people share experiences of how they were or were not listened to,prompt discussion by asking “What kind of a listener does that make you now?”

Examples may include:

“I’m from a large family where you have to fight for attention – now I’m always interrupting and I tend to talk too much.”

“I know what it feels like to be listened to, so I try to offer that to others.”

“I was never listened to, so I’ve always been very aware of trying to listen to my children.”

Ask people: *“What listening behaviours do you have now that you would like to change?”*

About EXERCISE B:

*“What are the implications for you now after experiencing these rules?”*

For example, if you were once told you must not show anger, when you encounter someone who is angry about their illness now, you may feel uncomfortable and find it hard to allow – let alone encourage – an expression of anger. You expect people to be reasonable.

**Wrap up points:**

We are all influenced by our past relationships and experiences, also with regard to how we speak and listen. This is very important to be aware of when working as a lay counsellor, so that we can recognise our own tendencies and what we might meet when dealing both with help-seekers and other volunteers.

##### ***Activity 5: Summarizing (50 min)***

**Purpose:**

To practice putting support skills together, and in particular, to use a summary to help focus on the main issue.

**Procedure:**

Ask the group to divide into groups of three and then ask:

* Speakers to choose a topic which they can talk about for 10 minutes;
* Listeners to use all their support skills;
* Observers to pay attention to the listener and complete a feedback sheet.

**Discussion questions**

After 10 minutes, ask listeners to summarize the main issues which the speaker talked about; ask the speaker to state which issue he or she considers the most important.

Ask observers to give feedback to the listener, concentrating particularly on the helpfulness of the summary.

Finally, invite listeners to summarize their own performance by listing the strengths and skills they want to develop.

Change roles and repeat.

**Wrap up**

##### ***Activity 6: Listening (25 min)***

**Purpose:**

This exercise provides listening practice as well as an opportunity for participants to begin to assess their own skills in supporting people affected by a crisis. The exercise concentrates on the skill of listening and giving one’s complete attention.

**Procedure:**

Ask participants to pair up and decide who will be listener/speaker first. Ask speakers to explore this topic for seven minutes:

“*How do you feel about the way you respond to people affected by crisis situations? Which of your life experiences have been relevant? What do you think you do that is helpful/unhelpful*?”

Ask listeners to give their full attention to what the speaker is saying, and allow the speaker to explore the topic in their own way, rather than ‘interviewing’ them. Instruct listeners to avoid asking questions, giving opinions, arguing or sympathizing.

After seven minutes, call time, and help people switch roles by getting them to swap chairs. Repeat.

**Discussion questions:**

The following sorts of questions can serve to prompt discussion about -- and learning from -- the exercise:

* *How was it different from everyday conversation?*
* *How did you feel when there were silences?*
* *Were you more comfortable as the speaker or the listener?*
* *What percentage of your attention were you able to give the speaker? What percentage do you usually give to people you are supporting?*
* *What stops you from giving your full attention?*
* *What is hardest for you about responding to people affected by crisis-support situations?*

**Wrap up**

# Significant life events

***Activity 1: Case example and discussion (15 min)***

Sofie is 28-years old and just submitted her Master thesis six months ago. She did very well in her studies: she obtained good grades, was a member of several student councils and party committees, had various interesting student jobs and internships, and did relevant volunteer work. Since submitting her thesis, Sofie has been unemployed though she feels that she has done everything possible to get a job. Her boyfriend, friends and family try to support and encourage her by saying that the unemployment rate is high and that she is doing everything right. However, Sofie has a hard time believing them and has started to withdraw from them. She has also started to doubt her own abilities and feels ashamed. Drained of energy, Sofie is sleep deprived and more emotionally volatile than usual. This strains her relationships to her boyfriend, friends and family. Two days ago she was almost hit by a car and subsequently suffered an emotional breakdown. She started thinking that it would have been better for her if she had been hit by the car. Sofie feels hopeless and thinks that no one understands her situation.

**Discussion questions:**

* *What reactions does Sofie suffer from? (answer: stress)*
* *What questions would you ask to find out more?*
* *What would be Sofie’s most pressing need?*

***Activity 2***

48-year-old Peter has been working for his company for over 20 years. For some months now there have been rumours about job cuts in the firm. As a response, Peter increased his workload and working hours to protect himself against being downsized. This only served to exacerbate the tensions between him and his wife, but not wanting to concern her, he never shared his worries about the workplace. Peter began to speculate how much damage a divorce would cause his two children. He started to experience feelings of shame, anger and sadness. One day, running late for an appointment, he had a minor car accident. No one was injured, but Peter experienced an emotional breakdown and his thoughts kept returning to the thought that it might have been better if he had been killed in the accident. Suffering from insomnia and nightmares, Peter didn’t expect anyone to understand his problems, and he became more and more isolated. He had difficulty concentrating and doing his job properly, and his relationship with his wife worsened. When he realized that he was on the brink of losing not only his job but also his family and his health, Peter called a telephone helpline.

**Discussion questions:**

* *What types of reactions would you expect Peter to experience?*
* *What kind of questions would you ask to find out more about his state/situation?*
* *What could be his most important needs?*

***Activity 3***

A man jumped to his death from a train platform in front of a moving train. The 45-year-old train driver hit the brakes immediately but was not able to stop the train in time. Now the driver cannot stop thinking about the suicide; he sees the image of the man in front of the train and relives the sound of the collision. Since the incident, which was three months ago, the driver has difficulties sleeping and cannot properly do his job, as operating a train reminds him of the event. He fears that this might happen again.

**Discussion questions:**

* *What further types of reactions would you expect the train driver to experience?*
* *What kind of questions would you ask to find out more about his state/situation?*
* *What could be his most important needs?*

# Managing stress

***Activity 1***

Divide participants into small groups giving each a case study. Ask them to think about the kind of stress the lay counsellor is encountering and what can be done about it. Consider the resources the person may have within themselves, as well as in their home and work environments, to respond to the stress while maintaining their well-being.

**Case A:** Susan is a lay counsellor working in a centre that helps people in the community find different types of services (shelter, legal aid, etc.) and provides basic emotional support. It is a busy day with several clients waiting to be seen. A man walks in, obviously agitated. He has received an eviction notice from his landlord because he was laid off from his job and can’t pay his rent. He says he has tried calling the centre several times but couldn’t get through on the telephone, and he says he has come all the way here on public transport as a last resort. He says he has tried calling different agencies he thought could help, but no one seems to want to help him. He is also angry for having to wait nearly 40 minutes to be able to speak with Susan.

* *What resources can Susan call on in the moment to manage her stress?*
* *What resources may be available to help her in managing the stressful situation?*
* *What can she do and how can others help her to de-stress after the client leaves?*

**Case B:** Thomas is a lay counsellor working in a hospital. Thomas has a brother who has been recently diagnosed with a very serious illness. In his work one day, he is asked to see a woman who has just lost her husband after a battle with cancer. The woman’s husband was about the same age as Thomas’ brother. As he talks with the woman, Thomas is reminded of his own situation and the sadness he feels.

* *What potential sources of stress are there for Thomas in this situation?*
* *How can he manage his stress and feelings as he talks with the client?*
* *What resources may be available to Thomas to cope with the situation before, during and after the session?*

**Case C:** A team of lay counsellors has been asked to help out in a recent disaster that affected nearby communities. There was a tornado that ripped through the area, and people have been evacuated to shelters. There is massive destruction of the communities, and some deaths occurred. There are over 1000 people displaced in the shelter. Many are frightened, upset and have various needs. Marie, David and Peter are members of a team that has been working to support the survivors. They have been working in the shelter now for 10 hours, trying to meet people’s basic needs, provide information and listen to stories of terrible loss or frightening events. Except for a brief snack and a check-in with their team leader, the lay counsellors have not taken much time to rest. David notices that Peter is starting to get impatient with the people in the shelter and Marie looks shaken by a story she heard from one family who is missing a family member.

* *What sources of stress are there for the three lay counsellors?*
* *How can each of them manage his or her stress? What can they do to support each other?*
* *What other resources or strategies can they call upon in maintaining their own well-being in this difficult situation?*
* *What might be helpful to them after they finish their shift and before going home?*

**Case D:** Nana is a volunteer at a girls’ club. Her mother was recently diagnosed with cancer. One of the girls at the girls’ club is very upset because her mother recently passed away after a prolonged illness. The girl’s mother was the same age as Nana’s mother. Talking to the girl, Nana is constantly reminded of her own situation, which makes her sad.

**Discussion questions:**

* *What possible stresses is Nana exposed to in this situation?*
* *How can she cope with her stress and the emotions she is experiencing while talking to the girl?*
* *What resources are accessible for Nana in order to cope with the situation before and after talking to the girl?*

**Case E:** A group of people suffered a severe accident while on a holiday camp. A man went berserk with a gun, firing uncontrollably at the people around him; several were killed – both adults and young people -- while others were severely injured. Some were lucky enough to escape. Many are frightened, upset and have different needs. Aida, David and Michael are the first to arrive to provide psychological first aid to the survivors. They have never before experienced anything like it, but have for the past ten hours been trying to help by meeting people’s basic needs, giving out information and listening to terrible stories of fear, horror and loss. They had a short break earlier in the day where they had some snacks and a brief check-in meeting with the team-leader, but otherwise they have not had any chance to relax. David notices that Michael starts to become impatient and is having a hard time listening to the stories. Aida looks shaken by a story she just heard about a young girl missing her older sister.

* *What sources of stress are the three lay counsellors exposed to?*
* *How can they each cope with their stress? What can they do to support one another?*
* *What other resources and strategies could be useful for them to take care of themselves in this difficult situation?*
* *What needs may they have afterwards?*

##### ***Activity 2***

Introduce to the group the idea that each person responds to stress in his or her own unique way, and we all have different types of methods for coping. Ask participants to consider what they can do to help themselves during particularly stressful times (going back to the resources they listed in the activity), and what they would like from their team and organization during times of stress, i.e., what would be helpful for them. The facilitator lists the strategies in two separate columns on a flip chart.

**Discussion questions:**

In the group discussion, note the range of strategies that can be helpful for individuals and teams, and the similarities and differences in responses on the list. For example, one person might say that if they feel particularly upset or stressed, they would like to be left alone for a while to cool down, while another would like to be asked if they are all right and be given a chance to talk to a colleague or supervisor. Sensitivity to each other and flexibility is key to keeping a team functioning well together.

# Distress

***Activity 1***

Divide participants into four small groups. Each group takes one of the categories below and discusses and lists how it can influence how someone responds to a distressing event.

1. Personal factors – characteristics of the individual themselves
2. Social and cultural factors – characteristics of the person’s family, community or other social supports
3. Environmental factors – characteristics of the larger environment in which the event occurs (i.e., the society, politics, institutions or structures for assisting someone)
4. The event itself – the nature, severity, and timeline of the event.

*The groups present their lists to each other and discuss. The facilitator can raise questions about whether some factors are protective or cause further risk; this can be argued either way in some cases, so it is therefore important that the lay counsellor perceives each person they are helping as unique.*

***Activity 2***

Case scenarios:

1. Flooding due to weeks of heavy rains that affect an entire community
2. Fire in a four-story building (no deaths, but several affected)
3. The sudden, accidental death of a loved one
4. Finding out that one has a serious illness
5. The bombing of a government building in which people are killed and injured

Each group receives a case scenario and is asked the following questions:

* *Describe the nature of the event*
* *How might the characteristics of the event influence how the impacted people respond to it?*
* *Why might different people involved in the event have different reactions to it?*

# Coping

***Activity 1***

Zara, a 44,-year-old nurse, was divorced from her husband after 20-years of marriage. The couple have no children. In Zara’s words the last 5 years have been “like hell” because her husband had several extramarital relationships. Immediately after the separation Zara felt enormously relieved. But now, after several months have passed, she feels alone and does not have any energy. She has even lost her motivation in her job. She tries to cope by doing sports every free minute, and tries to ignore the stress symptoms until her boss tells her that she thinks her performance has declined significantly during the past months. Now Zara is faced with the realisation that she feels bad enough to seek out counselling, and comes to you for help.

**Discussion questions:**

* *How would you try to build up a trustful relationship to Zara?*
* *How would you estimate Zara’s current coping efforts?*
* *What questions would you ask to find out more about possible supportive additional or different ways of coping?*

***Activity 2***

Aisha is 25 years old. She has just broken up with her boyfriend of 10 years whom she thought she would marry. The past two years have been nightmarish for Aisha, as her boyfriend started being abusive to her around the same time she discovered that he was having affairs with several other women. In the beginning after the break-up she felt relieved, but now after several months she feels alone and drained of energy. She has lost her motivation in her work as a nurse. She is trying to cope by engaging in sports every time she has a free minute, and has until now ignored the stress signs. Her boss has noticed that Aisha’s performance at work has not been her best for the last couple of months. She feels distressed and is in need of advice in order to move on.

**Discussion questions:**

* *How would you establish a relationship of trust with Aisha?*
* *How do you asses Aisha’s current coping mechanisms?*
* *What questions would you ask in order to find out more about other coping options?*

##### ***Activity 3: Providing information***

Ask for a few volunteers from the group. In this role-play, one helper will be assigned to give information to a small group of people evacuated to a shelter after a natural disaster (Choose a type of disaster that may be relevant to the context in which the lay counsellors live and work, such as flooding, hurricane, earthquake or other circumstance). Participants doing the role-play can take a few moments to discuss the situation: how much do they know, what is the situation in the shelter, etc.

**Discussion questions:**

Ask the participants playing the affected and those playing the information-giver how it was to play their roles. For example, what was most helpful in the information provided and what was challenging in providing the information.

Sometimes, helpers will encounter anger and frustration from affected people who are scared or feel their needs are not being met.

Discuss with the group how you as a helper can remain calm, compassionate and deal effectively with the anxieties and frustrations of the group.

Here are some tips to remember when giving information to acutely distressed people:

* Whenever possible, try to learn about the situation beforehand and have information ready before you talk with people.
* Find out where and when updates may be available.
* Let people know how to access information they may need, including contact details for services and other supports.
* Say only what you know, do not make up information or give false reassurances.
* Explain the source of your information and how reliable it may be.
* Remember that rumours may be common in some crisis situations; whenever possible, provide information to groups of people so that everyone hears the same message.
* Follow through if you promise to update people on what you know.

# Grief

***Activity 1***

Mary, 35, lost her six-week-old baby to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome two weeks ago. She comes to you because she does not feel able to care for her 7-year-old son anymore; she says her nerves are in pieces, she wants to stay in bed the whole day and cry. Her husband reproaches her because she neither cares for her son, the house, nor herself. She feels guilty for the death and thinks she should have been more attentive to the infant; furthermore, she has not been allowed to say goodbye to her baby, whom she found deceased in his bed.

**Discussion questions:**

* *How do you try to build up a trustful relationship to Mary?*
* *What do you think is needed in this case?*
* *Would you refer Mary to a professional, and if yes, how would you argue for the case?*

***Activity 2***

***Case example and discussion:***

**Procedure:**

Use a case example from your own target group that involves loss and grief, or use the one below:

On her way to work, 40-year-old Louisa was killed in an accident. Her husband and their two children – like everyone else – were completely shocked and are numbed by their anxiety and grief. They are supported by a visiting service to help with everyday matters. It doesn’t take the family long to realise that everything at home reminds them of their deceased mother and wife. Restructuring and decorating the house therefore become one of the key priorities in coping for the family.

**Discussion questions:**

* *What grief reactions can you identify in the case example?*
* *Where can you identify stressors? Where do you see resources?*
* *What further information do you need to better assess the father’s or the children’s situation and needs?*
* *How would you assist the family (what is your role here?)?*

**Wrap up**

# Psychological First Aid

**Activity 1*: Case scenarios (duration 10-30 min)***

Below are sample case scenarios of different types of crisis events. Case scenarios form the basis for role-play, where participants can explore the basic elements of PFA: good communication, a focus on practical needs, giving information, linking with loved ones and finding support. Consider the group you are training and the different types of affected people and distressing situations they may encounter. You may want to adapt the scenarios below to relate to your training group, or create new ones. Cases should be tailored to the group you are training and the types of affected people and distressing situations they may encounter. The duration of the case scenarios depends on the way you present it – as role-play, group discussion, etc.

For each case scenario, you can ask participants to role-play the steps they would take in offering PFA to the affected person/people. Use the role-plays for practice, feedback and group learning. If there is time, you may also want to ask the participants to consider the following questions as they prepare their role-plays:

* *What practical needs/concerns does/do the affected person/people have?*
* *What do I need as a helper to be able to assist people and link them with information, services and supports?*
* *What is beyond my role or my ability to provide help to the affected person/people?*

Acting out the case scenarios will likely reveal important learning points for participants related to the steps of PFA, basic elements and do’s and don’ts. Be sure to follow-up on the issues that come up during role-plays. It is important that participants understand that they do not have to be perfect in playing their roles. The most important thing is demonstrating genuine care, warmth and concern for the person. Role-plays can be repeated throughout the training; if a helper gets stuck in a challenging situation during a role-play, you can consider giving them a break and asking another participant to volunteer to play the part. In this way, many participants get a chance to practice and demonstrate for each other different styles, body language, words and strategies for helping.

***Case Scenario A: Natural disaster***

You and your colleague are volunteers with an organization that provides relief services during emergencies. After a massive flood in a nearby area, many people have been displaced from their homes. Displaced people are being brought by bus to a temporary shelter set up in a gymnasium of a local school. You and your colleague volunteer to go there to help receive them and offer PFA.

When the people begin to arrive, you see that some look very tired, some are crying, some appear fearful, while others display signs of relief that they have survived. They feel uncertain about what is happening to their homes and their community because of the flood. They also have many anxieties and questions about where they will sleep, eat, receive health care, and who will help them. They appear cold and tired and have only few belongings with them.

1. *You realize that there are some rumours spreading amongst the group, creating fear, and you realize that the affected people could benefit from some information. Demonstrate how you will give information to this group of people when they arrive. Consider where you can find accurate information, and what you know and don’t know about the crisis at this stage.*
2. *You notice a boy about 9 years old who is standing off to the side by himself. He looks frightened and withdrawn. It seems he has somehow been separated from his family and doesn’t know where they are. Demonstrate how you will approach him, offer PFA and how you will link him with appropriate services.*

***Case Scenario B: Violence***

You are a lay counsellor working in a community health clinic. The receptionist at the clinic calls you to come immediately and provide PFA to a client who has just walked in the door physically hurt and very distressed. When you arrive you find a woman about age 37 who has a small gash on her head; she is shaking and crying. She says someone threatened her on the street with a knife and demanded her purse; she was paralysed with fear. The assailant threatened to rape her, but she pleaded with him not to hurt her. He grabbed her purse, pushing her to the ground as he ran away and she hit her head as she fell. She knew the clinic was not far away and came directly here when she realized she was bleeding. She was – and still is – terrified, shaking and crying, and tells you she thought she was going to die.

1. *Demonstrate how you will provide PFA to this frightened woman and how you will link her to services and supports.*
2. *During your conversation, she reveals to you that she has been a victim of sexual assault once before many years ago. She feels as though this attack has brought back frightening and painful memories.*

***Case Scenario C: Accident***

You and your colleagues are lay counsellors driving together to work one morning. On the road ahead you see there has just been an accident. A car swerved to avoid something and smashed into a tree on the side of the road. You and your colleagues pull over and go to the vehicle. The driver of the car is agitated and is shouting to the passenger who is injured, bleeding and moaning. The driver does not appear to be injured, but appears anxious, talking rapidly and trying to move the injured passenger. Cars continue to pass by on the busy road. Some of the cars slow down to look and some people have gathered around to see if they can help.

*Demonstrate how you and your colleagues will provide PFA to both of the affected people. Keep in mind what kind of urgent care may be needed, and any safety concerns for yourselves, the affected people and onlookers*.

***Case Scenario D: A broken heart – Telephone support***

You are a lay counsellor who works for a telephone hotline. One evening, you receive a call from a college student, age 20, who says he is depressed. His girlfriend broke up with him recently and he is upset about it. His grades have been suffering and he has been withdrawing from his friends. He suffers from low self-worth and feels increasingly alone. Tonight he began to feel that life was no longer worth living, but these thoughts frightened him and he decided to call for help. He does not have any plans to kill himself and really wants to get some help.

*Demonstrate how you will provide PFA to this young man over the telephone or discuss how the supportive conversation can proceed.*

***Case Scenario E: Violence***

You are a lay counsellor in a programme for young homeless men. One night a young homeless man enters, obviously shocked and bruised. He is shaking and shouting. He has a gash on his forehead and obvious marks of having been in a fight. He says that a man followed him and threatened him with a knife. The man chased him through a park while yelling offensive words after him. The chase ended in a violent fight. There were several spectators but no one intervened. The fight ended when police sirens were heard approaching. The attacker ran away, and the young homeless man, not wanting to be found by the police, ran away too.

*One participant is the lay counsellor; one person plays the role of the young homeless man. How would you provide psychological first aid to the young man? Think about what immediate needs the young man might have and which security measures should be taken for both you and the young man.*

***Case Scenario F: Rape***

You are a lay counsellor in a girls’ club. One of the girls has been more quiet than usual. She is keeping to herself and spends a lot of time worrying about who she can walk home with. The others can also tell that she has been acting strangely at school; she does not participate during class or in other activities. You decide to ask her why she is being so quiet and why she does not want to be together with the others. At first she does not want to talk to you and rejects you with shouted curses before turning her back on you.

It appears that a month ago, the girl was attacked and raped while walking home from a friend’s house at night. Paralysed by fear, she was unable to resist or flee. She has not had the courage to tell anyone, and she did not report the incident to the police because she does not want her parents to know, partly because she had snuck out to visit her girlfriend against her parent’s will, and partly because her parents are devout Muslims and the incident would be shameful to them. The girl was a virgin when the incident occurred. She is sure that her parents will not forgive her if they were to find out, and she is convinced that she will never be able to marry because of it. When she tells you about the rape she seems frightened; she is shaking and quietly sobbing.

*One participant assumes the role of the lay counsellor, while one plays the young girl. How will the supportive conversation proceed?*

***Case Scenario G: Divorce***

You are a lay counsellor at an online crisis hotline. One night you receive an enquiry from a girl aged 13. She is afraid that her parents will get a divorce. The parents have not said anything about it, but they have been fighting a lot. The girl is worried about what might happen to her and her little brother if their parents’ divorce. She is preoccupied with how difficult it would be to move, and how much she doesn’t want to; she worries that she would not be able to make any friends in the new location. Lately she has not wanted to see her friends and hides out in her room, crying a lot and thinking about what to do in order that her parents will stay together. She also thinks a lot about not upsetting her parents and spends most of her time alone.

*One participant plays the lay counsellor, while one plays the young girl. How will the supportive conversation proceed?*

***Case scenario H: Forced marriage***

You are a lay counsellor in a mentoring project where young ethnic-minority women are assigned to volunteer mentors, who themselves are young women with personal experiences of moving away from home in order to go to college. The girl you are mentoring is on the run from her family, who is trying to force her to marry a man in her home country. Within the last year the girl has moved three times and is now finally settled in the city. She tells you that she fears that her uncle has discovered where she is staying and might try to contact her.

*One plays the lay counsellor; one plays the young girl. How will the supportive conversation proceed?*

***Case example I: Death of a loved one***

You are a lay counsellor at a local hospital. The emergency room calls you to come quickly to help provide support to a man who has just been told his wife has died. The ambulance had brought her to the hospital with severe chest pain, but she died on the way to the hospital of a heart attack. The doctors gave him the news when he arrived. He appears dazed and withdrawn and hasn’t said a word since he received the news. When you arrive, you see he is sitting with his head in his hands.

*Demonstrate how you will offer PFA to this man, and how you will connect him with the necessary support.*

***Case Scenario J: News of illness***

You are a lay counsellor with a cancer foundation. Your supervisor has just called you to see Grace, a young woman who was just diagnosed with breast cancer. She tells you that Grace is extremely distressed after receiving the news. Grace has two small children and her husband, Eric, is home watching them. When you arrive, you find Grace sobbing and shaking. She is overwhelmed with worry about many things: the months of treatment to come, her job, her marriage, the future of her children, etc. She is terrified and convinced that she will not survive the illness.

*Demonstrate how you will approach Grace and provide PFA.*

***Activity 2 (10 min)***

**Purpose:**

Make participants discuss their understanding of psychological first aid.

**Procedure:**

Begin by asking the participants:

*What do you think of when you hear the term “first aid?” Briefly acknowledge responses. “First aid” relates to physical/medical first aid and life-saving measures (i.e., airways, breathing, and circulation). Some participants may have received training or certification in physical first aid.*

*What do you think of when you hear the term “psychological first aid?” List all responses on a flip chart and briefly discuss.*

**Discussion points:**

Go through the elements listed on the flip chart and explain the different aspects of PFA.

**Wrap up points:**

Participants may respond by naming many of the aspects of Psychological First Aid (PFA), such as referring to exposure to traumatic or stressful events, comforting someone or helping to calm them down, and listening to someone and helping them overcome a very distressing event. However, some of the responses may be outside of the scope of PFA – such as psychotherapy or psychiatric care. In these cases, explain that you will come back to these points as we define PFA.

***Activity 3: Wrap-up important points (15 min)***

**Purpose:**

Give the participants the opportunity to actively formulate the lessons learned from the PFA module.

**Procedure:**

Given their experience with scenarios and role-plays, ask each participant to write down three things they feel are very important to keep in mind when providing PFA. Invite participants to describe some of the points they have written and put these on a flipchart for discussion.

**Discussion questions:**

Encourage participants to explain the points mentioned and make sure it is clear to all participants.

**Wrap up**