

**PFA – Do’s and Don’t’s**

What to say and do:

* Remember a person in crisis temporarily loses their basic sense of trust and security in the world. Stay close to the person to help them feel more safe and secure.
* Stay calm, even if the person you are helping is very emotional.
* Be prepared that people may express strong emotions such as angry outbursts when they are in acute distress.
* Listen attentively and carefully so you fully understand the person’s story and what their concerns are.
* Acknowledge their grief, tears, sense of loss or other feelings they may share.
* Be comfortable with silence. Be willing to sit quietly with the person if they wish.
* Ask questions as necessary to clarify the person’s experience and what they need.
* Make eye contact, as appropriate, and keep your body relaxed and in an open posture.
* Accept the person’s feelings and their interpretation of what has happened without judgment.
* If someone refuses help, let them know that they can still receive help in the future if they want it.

What NOT to say and do:

* Don’t rush or interrupt the person as they tell their story.
* Don’t ask the person to recount all the details of any traumatic experience they have had.
* Don’t give your opinions of the person’s situation.
* Don’t tell the person your troubles or share someone else’s story.
* Don’t tell the person’s story to others. Keep what they tell you confidential, unless it is necessary to keep them or someone else safe.
* Don’t correct facts about what happened or perceptions of the sequence of events.
* Don’t touch the person unless you know it is acceptable to them.
* Don’t stand over the person, move around unnecessarily or make other distracting movements or noises.