



INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

EU4HEALTH

Introduction to Psychological First Aid. EU4Health

Provision of quality and timely psychological first aid to people affected by Ukraine crisis in impacted countries.

Adapted from *Training in Psychological First Aid for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Module 1. An introduction to PFA* by Pernille Hansen, 2018.

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Look, Listen and Link principles referred to in this guide derive from: World Health Organization, War Trauma Foundation and World Vision International (2011). Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers. WHO: Geneva.

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Translations and adaptations

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**IN THE TRAINING PARTICIPANTS USE PHOTOS
OF SITUATIONS THAT ARE RELEVANT FOR THEIR
FUTURE WORK.**

**THE FACILITATOR CAN MAKE THE CHOICE OF
PHOTOS OR DOWNLOAD A SET FROM THE PS
CENTRE WEBSITE.**



INTRODUCTION

This module on basic psychological first aid skills for people affected by the international armed conflict in Ukraine, can be delivered in four hours. The training can be adapted to the context and needs of participants.

The module uses a variety of training methods, including presentations, discussions, role plays, and group and individual activities. Adults learn when there is variation in the sessions and when different methods are used. This will cater to different types of learners as well as keep the training active and interesting. Explaining the expected outcome of the training at the opening is important so participants are informed about what they can expect. This will help them identify if they reached the aims. At the opening of each session when introducing the topic, mentioning the learning outcomes is equally helpful.

When participants are involved, interact with peers, and are engaged with their senses it helps them transfer the learning to their daily work. Participants should bring their own case examples to the training to make it relevant for them. Therefore, the training should build on their own experiences as well as the experiences from those they serve to be relevant for the future work with people displaced from Ukraine.

Working as co-facilitators is a good option. Co-facilitators can take turns to lead sessions, help with time management, practicalities and help note key points from discussion groups on the board or flip chart. A co-facilitator can also assist if a participant need be accompanied for a time out.

If working with a translator, the training hours will be extended by at least thirty minutes. Ahead of the training, the facilitator and translator should meet to go over the training programme. The facilitator should also ensure that the translator is familiar with the key concepts in psychological first aid and other concepts in mental health and psychosocial support.

The training can be conducted with from eight up to twenty-two to twenty-four participants.

A suggested training programme lists the activities in the module with the materials needed and indicates timings for all the activities. Exercises from the *The Well-being Guide. Reduce stress, recharge and build inner resilience* are used during the training. This manual has several calming exercises that the facilitator can refer to in the exercise *Calming someone in distress* and in the session on *Selfcare*.

SAMPLE TRAINING SCHEDULE

TIME	TRAINING PROGRAMME	MATERIALS
9.00-9.20	1. Introducing participants to the training	Masking tape or name tags Flipchart with the ground rules (optional) and the training programme.
9.20-9.35	2. When is PFA needed	Flipchart and markers
9.35-9.50	3. What is PFA	Cut outs from annex 1 and gluestick or tape Flipchart with a definition in the middle and on the sides 'PFA is' and 'PFA is not' and markers
9.50-10.05	4. Helpful behaviours	<i>The Well-being Guide</i> Flipchart paper and markers

Break 10.05-10.15

10.15-10.35	5. Reactions to crises and traumatic events	Flipchart or paper and markers Situations from exercise 2 <i>Introduction to when PFA is needed</i>
10.35-11:00	6. Look	LOOK: Flipchart with actions for LOOK plus copies of cases
11.00-11.30	8. Listen	LISTEN: Prepared flipchart with actions for LISTEN and three listening skills to be practised <i>The Well-being Guide</i>

Break 11.30-11.45

11.45-12.05	9. Link	LINK: Prepared flipchart with actions for LINK plus copies of case studies Annex 2
12.05-12.30	10. PFA role plays	Flipchart with practice points
12.30-12.45	11. Self-care	Flipchart with the questions for pairs to discuss <i>The Well-being Guide</i>
12.45-13.00	12. Ending the training	Training evaluation forms

The training schedule can be adapted to suit the needs of the participants.

PREPARING FOR THE TRAINING

It is important to prepare well so the training runs smoothly. The following is a checklist of things to consider in preparation.

An alternative in exercise 9 is that the facilitator demonstrates a PFA role play to model the use of good PFA skills.

MATERIALS FOR THE TRAINING

- Printed copies of materials from the appendices for exercises
- Additional reference materials available:
- Printed copies of four emergency focused MHPSS posters from the PS Centre to hang on the walls in the training hall.
- Printed copies of the IFRC PS Centre:
- *A Guide to Psychological First Aid for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*
 - *PFA training manuals 2 to 4*
 - *Printed copy of the online training PFA in times of uncertainty*
 - *The Well-being Guide. Reduce stress, recharge and build inner resilience*
- and:
 - *IFRC Child Safeguarding Policy*
 - *IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.*
- Masking tape or name tags
- Paper, pens and markers
- Whiteboard or flip chart and tape to hang flip chart on walls






VENUE AND SNACKS ETC.

- Space for a circle of chairs, one for each participant. A classroom seating arrangement is not well fit for a training that build on participatory and engaging learning processes.
- Enough space to conduct multiple role plays at once.
- Access to washroom facilities, hand sanitizer, etc.
- Snacks, water, tea and coffee

REQUIRED PRE-TRAINING

MATERIALS

Before the training, participants should be informed that they have to watch the two *Let's talk about Psychological First Aid* videos available in English and Ukrainians <https://pscentre.org/multimedia/video/trainings/> if possible. The facilitator can chose other similar short introduction to PFA in a local language.

ICON					
ICON MEANING	Time needed for the activity	Aim of the activity	Materials needed	Facilitator's speech	Note for the facilitator

ROLE PLAYS

There are two types of role play. The first is demonstration role plays where the facilitators themselves act as PFA helpers providing PFA to someone in distress. The second is active role plays where participants practise providing PFA to someone in distress. Use both types of role plays in the training.

Demonstration role plays: It can be helpful to demonstrate a role play to show how to use the PFA skills. This can help participants learn what to do and what to avoid when providing PFA.

Case examples are included in the annex. Photos are also used in some exercises. They can be selected by the facilitator or downloaded from the PS Centre website. Adapt examples to suit the cultural and social context to suit the needs of participants.

Instructions for active role play: Before any role play tell participants that they should not role play a situation that is similar to an experience they themselves have had or a role they feel uncomfortable with.

In role plays, participants can imagine the situation and reactions described in the case examples, so that they can respond to the helper's questions and act realistically. They should also not make it too difficult for the helper as this can be frustrating and interfere with learning.

1.1 INTRODUCING PARTICIPANTS TO EACH OTHER AND THE TRAINING



15 min



To introduce the participants to each other and create a safe, friendly and comfortable atmosphere.
To introduce the three action principles of PFA, Look, Listen and Link.



Labels or masking tape and markers
Flipchart with ground rules if needed

Welcome participants when they arrive at the training venue, present yourself, and direct their attention to the ground rules on the flip chart. Ask them to write their name on a label or a masking tape. Next, invite them to take a seat in the circle.

1. Once all participants are seated, open the training by welcoming the participants and introducing the facilitator/s and translator.
2. Explain that participants will now do an activity to learn a little about each other. Ask everyone to silently LOOK around the circle. Give them a minute to look around to see who is in the training today. Next, they are to walk over to the person sitting opposite them in the circle. When they have all found a partner, they can stand or find a place to sit.
3. Tell the pairs to ask each other's names. Tell participants to remain in the pairs and say their name out loud to the entire group.
4. Next, they are to ask their partner what they do to relax and de-stress after a hard day's work or volunteering that helps them do their humanitarian service. They should LISTEN to find something they have in common. It can be a concrete activity that relaxes them as listening to music or taking a walk or it can be something they both get out of the activities as de-stressing.
5. Next, take some examples from the pairs on what LINKS them. Comment on great ideas for unwinding and recharging and mention the examples given of how this helps them. Stress how important it is to prioritize taking time for oneself in humanitarian work.
6. Now call everyone back to their original seats and explain that they have now used the three action principles of psychological first aid of LOOK, LISTEN and LINK. They have looked around, they have listened to each other and have found a link between them in the pairs.

1.2 THE TRAINING SCHEDULE AND PRACTICALITIES



5 min



To orient participants to the training programme and expected outcomes of the training



Flipchart with the training programme

1. Go through the training schedule on the flipchart and briefly explain each activity and the aims of the training What PFA is, who needs it, when and where, how to offer PFA and care for oneself and the team.
2. Give practical information, such as breaks, where to find washrooms, attendance sheets to be signed, consent for the use of photo and video etc.
3. Mention that this short training does not cover topics such as how to handle complicated situations, or how to provide psychological first aid to children or groups of staff or volunteers. Show the resource table where participants can find copies of other materials on PFA as training manuals and *A Guide to Psychological First Aid for the Red Cross and Red Crescent*.

2 THE TRAINING SCHEDULE AND PRACTICALITIES



20 min

1. Ask participants to pair up with the person sitting next to them. Instruct them to discuss for two minutes what they know about PFA. If none of them are familiar with PFA, ask them what they think PFA is.
2. After two minutes, ask the pairs to share what they know about PFA or think PFA is.
3. Summarize their responses and explain:
Psychological first aid is a set of skills and attitudes for helping people in distress who need support to manage their situation and cope with immediate challenges. These skills can be used in everyday life and when responding to a crisis.

4. Now give the pairs two minutes to discuss in which situations someone may need psychological first aid in their work context.

5. Ask them to share their situations with the large group. Note down the types of situations they bring up on a flipchart and ensure the below examples are covered. The situations can be used as a basis for role plays later in the training in the session Reactions to crises and traumatic events.

Examples could be in everyday situations when someone:

- is upset after an argument with a friend
- is coming in late for work due to traffic and had promised to be there on time
- is overwhelmed by the responsibility of caring for loved ones

or in crisis situations when someone:

- has to evacuate and leave home
- is separated from others during transport or movement
- is in another country and hears about attacks on their hometown
- has difficulties registering in a foreign country
- cannot get in touch with loved ones in another country
- finds out they have a serious illness
- is in or witnesses a traffic accident
- is discriminated against because of their language or nationality
- is assaulted or experiences other forms of violence
- witnesses something frightening or traumatic as a bomb blast
- experiences a disaster, like an earthquake or a flood
- loses a pet or a loved one.

6. Highlight that distressing events can be happening to one person as for example when someone has to leave a home country or has lost a loved one. They can also be public and affect many people together for example due hazards and disasters as an armed conflict where many are affected at the same time.

Say: Some distressing events lead to long periods of uncertainty and it is important to be aware that those displaced during the international armed conflict in Ukraine live with uncertainties. Most will not know what their future will bring for long periods of time. They will also not have full control over their current life circumstances and will be mentally distressed by living with the losses of home, loved ones, everyday lives and professional identities. Some may have witnessed traumatic events in their home cities or on the way to the country they are now settled in.

Continue by explaining: *When we experience frightening or distressing events like the ones you have mentioned, we react with our bodies, thoughts, and our feelings. This is natural. Everyone reacts when they go through something stressful and difficult or live with uncertainties. Most people recover from*

difficult experiences by themselves or with the help of friends, family, or others. Psychological first aid involves knowing common reactions to distressing events and how to help people understand and cope with these reactions.

Psychological first aid help people cope better emotionally and practically, and in this way helps to reduce the negative impacts. Part of psychological first aid is helping the affected access social support, which can help to reduce stress and improve recovery.

Some may need more help than psychological first aid. Part of learning psychological first aid skills is being able to recognize when someone needs other types of help, and to refer the person in distress. We will talk more about this later in the training.

3

WHAT IS PFA ?



15 min



To learn what PFA is and what it is not.
To stimulate discussion on who can provide PFA, when and where it is given.



Gluestick, cut outs from annex2 with PFA statements. Flipchart with the definition of PFA in the middle and This is PFA on one and This is not PFA on the other side on the sides.

This exercise is optional if the participants already understand that PFA for anyone, anytime and can be delivered by anyone. Should this be the case, the facilitators can allow for more time for the PFA practice.

A co-facilitator or a participant can note what is being said on the side of the flipchart and glue the cut outs under the correct headings.

1. Ask a participant to read the definition of PFA on p.13 from *A Guide to PFA for Red Cross Red Crescent* from the book or from the flipchart.

Psychological first aid is a method of helping people in distress so they feel calm and supported in coping with their challenges. It is a way of assisting someone to manage their situation and make informed decisions. The basis of psychological first aid is caring about the person in distress. It involves paying attention to the person's reactions, active listening and, if needed, providing practical assistance, such as problem solving or help to access basic needs.

2. Distribute the statements cut out from Annex 1 among participants ensuring that the statements are in a mixed order.

3. One by one the participants read a statement. Ask the participants to stand if they agree that the statement read is PFA and remain sitting if they disagree. The facilitator steers the discussion and clarifies correct answers if there is any doubt! End by the placing the post it on the correct place on the flipchart.

4. Address any questions on the statements and end by explaining:

Psychological first aid aims to reduce the initial distress someone feels after a difficult event or experience. It provides for a person's practical and basic needs, such as helping someone find somewhere to stay if they have had to leave their home or helping them contact family or other help. It involves helping without taking the power away from them to manage their situation and be able to make informed decisions, so they can adjust and cope with the challenges they are facing.

PFA is...

(True)

- comforting someone who in distress and helping them feel safe and calm
- assessing needs and concerns
- protecting people from further harm
- providing emotional support
- helping to address immediate basic needs, such as food and water, a blanket or a temporary place to stay
- helping people access information, services and social support.

PFA is not...

(False)

- something only professionals do
- professional counselling or therapy
- encouraging a detailed discussion of the event that has caused the distress
- asking someone to analyze what has happened to them
- pressing someone for details on what happened
- pressuring people to share their feelings and reactions to an event.

5. Now ask the participants if PFA should only be provided right after a crisis event. Ask participants to stand if they think the answer is yes and remain sitting if they think the answer is no.

Say: PFA is an approach that can help during or in the immediate aftermath of a stressful event. However, PFA can also be helpful days, weeks, months or even years after an event has taken place, when the situation develops further or memories of what happened triggers reactions.

And PFA can be provided in any setting where it is safe and comfortable for the helper and person(s) in distress. It can be in a home, train station, evacuation centre, community centre, shopping centre, school, hospital, clinic, or at the location of a crisis. It is best to provide psychological first aid in a quiet and calm environment where everyone feels safe and secure. If someone has experienced something very sensitive, such as sexual violence, privacy is essential for confidentiality and to respect the person's dignity.

6. End the session by announcing a ten minute comfort break.

4 HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL BEHAVIOURS



15 min



To discuss what helps and what is unhelpful behaviours for someone affected by a crisis situation



The Well-being guide
Flipchart with the headings *Helpful behaviours* and *Not helpful behaviours*

This exercise is optional if the participants already understand that PFA for anyone, anytime and can be delivered by anyone. Should this be the case, the facilitators can allow for more time for the PFA practice.

When participants are back from short break lead the *Take a deep breath* exercise. Spend some moments on taking comments after the one-minute breathing exercise on how it was experienced.

A co-facilitator or participant will write what is being mentioned during the brainstorm in the exercise on the flipchart. Organize the responses into two columns headed 'Helpful behaviours' and 'Not helpful behaviours.'

1. Ask the participants to think of a time in their life some time ago when they experienced something that was overwhelming and difficult to handle. Say that they will not share what the difficult event was.
2. Next ask them to think about what help they received from others or what help they wished they had received. What was helpful or unhelpful.
3. Invite participants to share some of their reflections on what was helpful and what was not helpful. Focus on the help they received and do not go into detail about the difficult experiences. A co-facilitator or participant notes the key words on the flipchart.
4. Use the responses to show that different actions are helpful in different situations and for different people. Someone who is in a state of shock may find it helpful that a friend takes control of the situation and takes care of practical matters. However, another person might find the same action unhelpful because it makes them feel powerless and unable to cope. However, for the affected to know that their reactions are natural and what they can do to live with these, are important pieces of information.

5. End by saying:

PFA is helpful both in crisis situations and after traumatic events. Many of the situations mentioned earlier are crisis events that does not necessarily involving threats to life. Other situations are traumatic events that can be defined as involving exposure to a perceived or actual threat of death, serious injury or violence. The same effect can the memory of the traumatic event have. Examples of such events include severe accidents, fires, robberies, physical attacks, terrorist attacks, natural disasters and any form of sexual and gender-based violence. The word "exposure" could be a direct experience, witnessing something traumatic or learning about a loved one experiencing such an event. A traumatic event is usually unexpected, unavoidable and dangerous. An important factor in how people react to their event is their experience of it as mentioned earlier.

HELPFUL	NOT HELPFUL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listened calmly • Called my family • Brought me a glass of water • Took control of the situation • Explained the reactions I would have in the next days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started panicking herself • Took control of the situation • Interrupted and gave advice • Talked about themselves

5

REACTIONS TO CRISES AND TRAUMATIC EVENTS



20 min



To discuss common reactions to crises and traumatic events



Flipcharts or papers and tape

1. Instruct participants to form groups of three and distribute flipchart/paper and markers. Ask the groups to use one of the examples from the introduction from their daily work with Ukrainian refugees. If this is not relevant for their volunteering, they can choose another example from their daily work.
2. Ask the groups to write the type of event chosen as a heading to their paper. Draw a timeline marking the times: right after the event, six months later and a year later. At each of these time marks they note a few typical reactions to the event. Give the groups five to ten minutes to work on this.
3. When the groups have completed their timelines with different reactions, ask them to display all the papers next to each other. This can be on a wall or on the floor. Give participants a few minutes to look at the different timelines and reactions to events
4. Ask participants what similarities or differences they see in the timelines.
5. After all groups have contributed, summarize the discussion and highlight that:
 - **Reactions differ:** There is not one standard reaction to distressing experiences. People react in different ways.
 - **Timing of reactions differs:** Reactions change over time. Some people react calmly during or immediately after an event. However, they may become distressed days, weeks or even months after the event, whilst others react very strongly at the time of the event.

Explain that how someone reacts depends on many factors.

- **What people bring to the event**
Their experience, age, social support/network, pre-existing mental/physical health, culture, prior trauma exposure
- **The experience of the event**
The nature, severity, duration of and how close they were to the event. What they witnessed, whether they are injured, have suffered losses, etc.
- **What happens after the event**
The ability to access support, how they are treated by authorities and aid organizations, the level of impact and disruption on life.

6. Conclude the session by saying: *Many who experience distressing or traumatic events have common reactions and recover well, especially if they can restore their basic needs and receive support from people around them.*

After a traumatic event, most will experience post-traumatic stress reactions in the first days or weeks – reactions that will diminish over days and weeks. During the first days or weeks they will experience heightened stress and alertness, intrusive thoughts or images, and may avoid things and events that remind them of the traumatic event. There will often be cognitive challenges with memory and difficulties in focusing. If these symptoms persist for more than four to six weeks a person may have developed post-traumatic stress syndrome.

Knowing what reactions are natural after major crises and traumatic events is very important to normalize and be prepared for reactions and it is part of PFA to inform people of reactions they can expect to have.

6 LOOK



25 min



To explore the action principle Look



Flipchart with actions for LOOK
Photo cases from annex 5

LOOK FOR

- if you and the team are ready to respond
- information on what has happened and is happening
- who needs help
- safety and security risks
- physical injuries
- immediate basic and practical needs
- emotional reactions.

Explain that although it looks as if it makes sense to follow the order of the action principles, the order of actions may be mixed and take place in different ways and sequences, depending on the situation. At times some actions will take place simultaneously.

First, participants will go through LOOK, next LISTEN and finally LINK.

Show the flipchart with information on LOOK and explain: *The first action principle is LOOK, which is also about looking out for yourself when responding. Is each PFA provider ready to act given the information they have about the situation?*

1. Instruct participants to think about what they generally do to prepare themselves when responding as volunteers or prepare for a similar situation if they haven't volunteered yet. Give them a minute make some notes of their techniques or note ideas for what they can do if they haven't been active yet.
2. Next, ask them to turn to their neighbour and exchange ideas. Ask for one of the pairs to say what they do to look out for themselves. If others use the same technique, they can raise their hand or stand up if this is preferred. Ask the other pairs if they have other techniques so all ideas for looking out for oneself is mentioned.
3. Next say that responders must look for information on what has happened and is happening. Ask participants, if they have been in situations where the information is of such a nature that they would not respond? Discuss this with the group when it is prudent not to intervene. End by reminding participants that volunteers always have the right to decline a task if it does not suit them.

Continue by saying: *LOOK refers to assessing safety and security risks, finding out what has happened, and is happening; assessing if there are physical injuries that need tending to; finding out if the person(s) have immediate basic and practical needs; and assessing what emotional reactions the person is experiencing and what kind of help will be caring and supportive. In many crises or traumatic events the affected will have experienced losses.*

4. Form groups of three or four and hand each group a photo of typical situation they work with. If participants prefer, they can work with a case from their context.
5. Instruct the participants to look at the photo and discuss how to apply the LOOK principle to their case.
 - what has happened
 - what are the risks
 - who needs help
 - what are the losses of the affected
 - if anyone is injured
 - what immediate and practical support is needed.

6. Ask one or two groups to briefly tell about their case or show their photos and explain what they would LOOK for in their situation. Use the below list to guide their presentation to ensure that all key points are covered. Ensure that they mention the safety of the responders and discuss with participants how and why they should always prioritize their own safety in any situation.

LOOK for:

Information on what has happened and is still happening

- **Who needs help**
Who to help first
- **Safety** Is anyone in danger.
Should the affected be accompanied somewhere else to be safe
- **Physical injuries**
Is anyone physically hurt and needs immediate medical attention
- **Immediate basic and practical needs**
Is a phone, blankets, clothes, food or water needed
- **Emotional reactions**
What are the emotional reactions and what is the most helpful way to support. Does anyone need referral for immediate professional mental health support

PREPARING TO RESPOND

Individual tasks:

bring everything needed: phone, charger, water, first aid kit etc.
be briefed on the crisis situation and the services provided on site
know which support is available during and after the response
inform your relatives about the tasks and when to expect you home.

Team discussion tasks:

which reactions to expect from the affected
when would additional support be needed
what reactions may occur for teams interacting with the affected.

Adapted from the PFA pocket guide from Ukraine Red Cross.

7 LISTEN



30 min



To practise approaching someone and listen attentively and accept others' feelings



Flipchart with actions for Listen and one with three listening skills
The Well-being Guide.

LISTEN

- approaches someone
- introduces themselves
- pays attention and listen attentively
- accepts others' feelings
- calms the person in distress
- asks about needs and concerns
- helps the person(s) in distress find solutions to their immediate needs and problems.

1. Display the flipchart with the heading LISTEN and the action points below. Explain: LISTEN refers to the way you communicate from the very first moment of approaching and interacting with someone in distress. First, we will look at approaching someone and introducing ourselves to them.

2. Ask the participants what considerations they have in their context about approaching someone who may need their help. Do they greet men or women, older adults or children in different ways? Invite a few participants to

demonstrate approaching and introducing themselves to people in different ways based on the cases they work with.

3. Show one or two of the photo cases and discuss what information the PFA recipients will need to have about the PFA providers. Also discuss why this information may be important for someone in distress?

4. When listening to someone in high distress, they feel acknowledged, taken seriously, seen, heard and understood. A few key sentences to use to show that you have listened attentively are useful. Ask participants, which sentences they can use to show someone affected that they are being listened to with respect? Take answers from the group and note good sentences on a flip chart. Ensure the below are covered.

- I understand your concern
- You have a right to be sad/angry/disappointed/...

- I can hear you saying ...
- I understand that you are worried about ...
- In this situation, your reaction is natural ...
- Perhaps we can discuss possible solutions ...
- I can offer to ...
- I am worried about you and would like to suggest a place where you can get help

Next, continue by saying: *Listening involves all the senses and is also about behaviours. Listening is being present, paying attention and trying to understand what has happened to the distressed, what they are feeling, and what their needs are. It is being open, and sensitive to what the person is experiencing. It is also recognizing when someone does not want to talk and allow silence. We will now explore listening attentively. Being a good listener will benefit can improve relationships with others both at home and at work.*

1. Ask participants for examples of what people do, consciously or unconsciously, when listening to other people that make a person speaking feel they are not being heard or paid attention to. Examples may include answering texts on their mobile, sitting and making notes, reading other documents, gazing out of the window, asking irrelevant questions or having a dismissive body language.

2. When listening actively you pay attention to what is being said by giving the speaker your full attention. Attentive listening is both verbal and nonverbal. There are some key skills to use when listening attentively:

- *ensure*
- *ask*
- *reflect*

3. Carry out a demonstration role play of the attentive listening exercise with a co-facilitator or an experienced participant where the above skills are used, and the experiences of the speaker are validated and reactions normalized. Another option is to show a short demonstration video.

4. Instruct participants to form pairs and give them ten minutes for the exercise. The facilitator keeps time and tell participants when time is up for each speaker and when it is time for feedback in the pairs. They will have four minutes to speak and be listened to each and two minutes for feedback. One person at a time will tell the other a story of a challenging event they witnessed some time ago. Give some examples of situations they could talk about:

- an argument with a colleague
- finding it difficult to find a balance between work and private life
- having workplace environment issues

- dealing with difficult people when volunteering
- lack of development perspective at work or when volunteering
- not being encouraged to co-create in developing ideas and practices at work or when volunteering

5. Say that the listener will use the three skills mentioned on the flipchart:

- a. Check your understanding if anything is unclear about what is being said. Using your own words, say something like: *"I want to be sure I understand you correctly. You said that...."*
- b. If asking a question about something you wish to know more about, make it an open question that cannot only be answered with a yes or a no. Using your own words, say something like: *"Can I ask you what you did next...."*
- c. Reflect back to the speaker what is being said. Try to the best of your capacity to capture the essence of what they said and reflect it back. You can also capture the feelings that are conveyed as this can help a person in distress become aware of what they are feeling instead of being overwhelmed. Using your own words, say something like: *"Let me sum up what you have said so far. When it happened you were outside and did not know what was happening inside, and there were disturbing noises. This left you very worried. Is this more or less right?"*

Once done you will give each other feedback on how the experience was of being listened to attentively.

6. Ask participants to return to the plenary for a group discussion. Begin by asking if it was easy or difficult to listen with full attention.

7. Continue the plenary discussion and ask for suggestions on why attentive listening can be helpful to someone in distress. Briefly discuss what the listener can do if anything happens to interrupt the listening. Explain that a PFA provider also accepts others' feelings and avoid letting personal moral values or beliefs influence the helping behaviour or judgment of someone else's reactions.

8. Ask if participants if there are any feelings, they would find it challenging to witness? What would made it difficult to handle the feelings in others? What could help them better handle an outbreak of feelings in the future?

9. Mention, that when offering PFA to someone who has suffered a loss, it is important to acknowledge the loss and not diminish it by saying 'that it will pass' or anything along those lines. End by reminding participants of the humanitarian principle of do no harm by accepting the reactions of others when providing PFA.

CALMING SOMEONE IN DISTRESS



To practise calming someone in distress.



Flipchart, markers and The Well-being Guide

A co-facilitator or a participant can note the key points on a flipchart.

1. An important part of LISTEN is to be able to calm someone in distress. Explain: People in a state of shock or high distress will feel confused, numb, aggressive or overwhelmed, have reactions like crying, shaking or trembling, having difficulty breathing or being very upset and have difficulties understanding what is being said. The helper will often speak slowly and repeat key messages. A key skill is to know how to help someone feel calm if they are reacting like this.
2. Ask participants to talk with the person next to them about what they can do calm someone in distress.
3. After a few minutes ask them to share their ideas. Write these on a flipchart. Add the examples below if needed:
 - Keep your tone of voice firm and calm. Should the affected be completely absorbed in their own feeling state, ask their name and other basic information to get them engaged in the here and now.
 - Explain that the reaction is natural in a very challenging situation.
 - Gently lead them away from a disturbing situation whilst making small talk.
 - If appropriate, maintain gentle eye contact with the person as you talk with them.
 - Remind the person that you are there to help them and that they are safe, if it is true.
 - Encourage the person to focus on their breathing and to breathe slowly.
4. Form pairs and ask one person in each pair to role play someone who needs to be calmed by the other. The upset person can pick a situation they have witnessed or an imagined acute reactions of a persons in the case they have worked with earlier. Give role players a minute to plan how they will act and tell them not to overact. Let the roleplay unfold for a few minutes and ask the role player to give the calming person feedback on what worked well. Call participants back to the plenary.
5. Ask a couple of participants to report to the plenary what they found useful in calming others and what worked well when being calmed.
6. End the session by asking participants to note how they are feeling right now. Then lead the Hug yourself calm from the Well-being Guide from the PS Centre. Ask participants how they feel after doing the exercise. Was the exercise useful for them? If so, when could they use it?

ASKING ABOUT NEEDS AND CONCERNS AND ADDRESS IMMEDIATE NEEDS AND PROBLEMS



To discuss how to ask about needs and concerns and what to focus on when helping someone address immediate needs and problems.

1. Explain that the last two action points for LISTEN are finding out about needs and concerns and helping to identify immediate needs and problems. Highlight the following points on asking about needs and concerns:

It is important that:

- If someone does not want help, do not impose it.
- Focus on what help is needed and what the priorities are for the distressed.
- Do not focus on details of what happened or how the distressed feel about the situation.
- Gather as much information as possible to clarify what practical help is needed without probing or pressuring them to talk.

2. Ask participants to give a few examples of immediate needs and practical they could help with in the cases, for example from the photos.

Examples could be:

- basic needs, such as food, water, a blanket, a place to sit quietly
- someone to comfort you and help you feel calm
- access to a phone or charger to call a loved one
- someone to help you to be able make decisions about the next steps
- help to call the emergency response services

3. End by saying: *It is often simple gestures of caring that people need when they are in distress, so that they can feel calm, and gather their energy to make decisions on what to do next. Listening attentively help identify what the person needs, how to help in the immediate situation, and also what you need to do to link them to more help.*

8 LINK



20 min



Discuss needs for linking the affected with social support and be aware of when referrals are necessary.



A flipchart with the action points of LINK
Flipchart and markers

LINK REFERS TO HOW TO

- access information
- connect with loved ones and social support
- tackle practical problems
- access services and other help.

LINK is the third actions principle where you give information and help people access the resources they need to cope with their situation. It is connecting people with loved ones, with social supports and helping them access services. A provider may only be there to help for a short time and the role is to assist the person help themselves and to regain control of their situation. Involve the distressed person(s) themselves as much as possible in making these decisions. When working with psychological first aid it is important to have information on local referral systems.

1. Ask the participants to go back to the groups of three and look at the photo or refer to the case they worked with. Groups are to list the different kinds of practical help and the immediate sources of social support that could be available. They are next to discuss how to find out which social support resources the affected have in their network and which other services that could be relevant. These can include the authorities, distribution sites, legal help, child protection services, Restoring Family Links services, etc. After a few minutes ask them to indicate an order of priority for these different sources of help.

2. Ask groups to share the top three actions they have chosen with the whole group.

Say: It is impossible to know the details of another person's life, including what they need, what their strengths are, and what their main sources of support are. Assist the person to identify what they need, and to help prioritize what is most important to them.

Continue by explaining that there are some situations where they should refer for professional mental health or other health-related support as soon as possible. Ask, if they know what behaviours or signs and symptoms might indicate the need for such a referral. Write their suggestions on a flipchart.

Make sure participants are aware that the following are causes for concern: If someone

- is an unaccompanied or separated minor
- shares that they have been harmed or abused and thus may need protection and medical care
- has not been able to sleep for the last week and is confused and disorientated
- has no food, water or a place to sleep
- is so distressed that they are unable to function normally and care for themselves by, for example, not eating or keeping clean despite food and washrooms available
- loses control over their behaviour and behaves in an unpredictable or destructive manner
- has a pre-existing mental health disorder
- threatens to harm themselves or others.

3. Ask the participants to discuss what referral protocols exist for Ukrainians with the needs for mental health services in their context. In their context where Ukrainians have the same rights to mental health services as other residents.

9 PFA ROLE PLAY



25 min



For participants
to practise PFA.



Annex 2
Case studies

The role plays are conducted in pairs. If there is an uneven number of participants, there is the option of the co-facilitator taking part in the role plays. Each participant will take turns in being a person in distress and a PFA provider. Participants will work with a role play from annex 2 or a situation from the cases used earlier. When giving feedback, the recipient of PFA give feedback on how the provider applied the Look, Listen and Link principles.

1. Instruct the participants that the activity will take 15 minutes. Each role play will last about eight minutes and next there will be a few minutes for feedback. After the feedback the roles will be reversed in the pairs. Inform them, that they will be told when it is time to end the role play and to change roles.

2. After the role plays are completed, ask all the participants to share in plenary what they thought went well and what was difficult.

3. Summarize the challenges and difficulties participants shared and ask for ideas on how to overcome these challenges.

10 SELF-CARE



20 min



To promote understanding for prioritizing self-care



Flipchart with the questions listed below to discuss

1. Ask the participants to form pairs with the person they introduced themselves to in the opening exercise.
2. They are now to discuss how they can apply the Look, Listen and Link principles in their own lives to care for themselves:
 - What they do to look out for themselves .
 - What they do to they listen to their bodies and the needs for rest, restoration, sleep and having fun.
 - What they do to prioritize their social lives.
 - Who can and will they turn to if things become difficult.
 - And what keeps them from doing the above, if this is the case.
3. Call the participants back to the plenary and ask the for reflections on the topic of self-care. Discuss how difficult it can be to self-care when faced with the sufferings of others. Stress, that to go on caring for others they need to take care of themselves.
4. End the discussion by saying: Providing psychological first aid to people in distress can be difficult, both physically and emotionally for the provider. It can hard meeting and talking to people in distress even if it is meaningful. Sometimes you provide the best help you can, and you may still be left with a feeling that you did not do enough. What will you do if this happens?
5. Ask participants to tell their partner about when they will practice the relaxing and unwinding activity the next time that they mentioned in the beginning of the training.

11 ENDING THE TRAINING



15 min



To end and evaluate
the training



Copies of the
evaluation form

1. Say that you have now reached the end of the training *Introduction to PFA* and everyone will fill out a feedback form and next say a few words on what they have learned.
2. Give participants the training evaluation form and ask them to complete it. When everyone has finished, collect the completed forms.
3. Ask participants to stand in a circle and share a few words about the most valuable things they have learnt. Add your own comments and thank everyone for their participation.

12 ANNEXES

1. PFA STATEMENTS

Make copies of the following statements and cut them out so that you can give one to each participant in the group. It does not matter if the same statements are used more than once.

PFA is comforting someone who is in distress and helping them feel safe and calm.	PFA is providing emotional support.
PFA is assessing needs and concerns.	PFA is helping to address immediate basic needs such as food, water, a blanket or a temporary place to stay.
PFA is protecting people from further harm.	PFA is listening to people but not pressuring them to talk.
PFA is not something only professionals do.	PFA is helping people access information, services and social supports.
PFA is not encouraging a detailed discussion of the distressing event.	PFA is professional counselling or therapy.
PFA includes pressing someone for details on what happened	PFA is not asking someone to analyse what has happened to them.
PFA is not pressuring people to share their feelings and reactions.	PFA is going over what happened to you again and again

2. CASE STUDIES

Use the case studies for the role plays in the final PFA role play activity, or use create cases based on the template based on the situations identified by participants in the Introduction. Participants can also work with a case from the photo case bank from the PS Centre website.

CASE STUDY 1

WALKING HOME FROM WORK

After volunteering in a language class for Ukrainians you walk home. Approaching a bus stop you witness three local youth hurling abuse at an older Ukrainian woman with two younger children. When seeing you approaching the youngsters run away.

CASE STUDY 2

RECEIVING BAD NEWS

You are conducting assessment interviews in a shelter for Ukrainians in another town. A group of agitated women come and pull you out of an interview. They lead you to a room where you can hear a woman wailing. When you enter the room, the wailing woman staring at her phone screaming. Two school aged children sit in the corner staring at their mother without saying anything.

CASE STUDY 3

THE EVACUATION MISSION

you are volunteering on a mission helping an evacuation of a town that the authorities ordered. In the bus you notice two young people who seem deeply affected: one is sobbing uncontrollably the other seems frozen. A woman next to them tells you that their flat is completely destroyed and they lost most of their belongings.

CASE STUDY 4

FALLING ILL

A young Ukrainian woman comes to a livelihood training early one morning. She is in tears as she comes up to you that she has just received news she has breast cancer. She is sobbing uncontrollably and keeps saying she is not ready to die. Who will look after her two children when her husband is far away.

3. TEMPLATE FOR CREATING CASES

DESCRIBE THE DISTRESSING EVENT: _____

GIVE SOME KEY INFORMATION OF THE AFFECTED PERSONS:

DESCRIBE THE CONTEXT:

NOTE THE MAIN REACTIONS OF THE AFFECTED:

4. TRAINING EVALUATION FORM

TRAINING EVALUATION FOR INTRODUCTION TO PFA					
	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
1. Overall, how would you rate the content of the training?					

2. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2.1 The content was interesting and engaging				
2.2 The training met the training objectives				
3. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements				
3.1 I know what psychological first aid is and what it is not				
3.2 I understand the three action principles of Look, Listen and Link				
3.3 I have practised providing PFA to someone in distress				
3.4 I understand the importance of self-care when helping others				
4. The following helped my understanding				
4.1 Plenary discussions				
4.3 Group exercises				
4.4 Role plays				

5. The facilitator	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
5.1 The facilitator was knowledgeable about the topic				
5.2 The facilitator presented the content clearly and logically				
5.3 The facilitator had good facilitation skills				
6. Thinking about the training overall				
6.1 I have gained a better understanding of psychological first aid				
6.2 The learning environment was safe and inclusive				

7. What went well in the training?

8. What could improve the training?





Psychosocial Centre

**International Federation of Red
Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

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