



PEER SUPPORT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID WORKSHOP

Guide for facilitators



MHPSS
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HUB





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Guide developed by the workshop facilitators:

Arz Stephan, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Advisor, Red Cross Red Crescent Movement MHPSS Hub, arste@rodekors.dk

Catherine Iskandar, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Officer at the Lebanese Red Cross, catherine.iskandar@redcross.org.lb



Introduction

The following presents the facilitation guide of the “Peer Support and Psychological First Aid” workshop, which was delivered during the 21st edition of the Mediterranean Youth Camp Atlantis (2025).

This camp, organized by the Centre for Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CCM), is an annual gathering for young people from the 26 National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in the Mediterranean basin. Its main objectives are to build capacity, facilitate the exchange of experiences, strengthen competencies, and inspire young people to act as agents of social change.

Since 2022, one of the key topics addressed at the camp has been youth mental health, dedicating a full day to a workshop on peer support and Psychological First Aid (PFA). From the very first edition, CCM has relied on the support of the RCRC International MHPSS Hub for the facilitation of this workshop. For the 2025 edition, preparation and delivery involved Catherine Iskandar from the Lebanese Red Cross, a former camp participant in 2024, with the aim of strengthening her facilitation skills so she can apply these competencies within her National Society. This mentoring process was supervised by Arz Stephan from the MHPSS Hub.

Given the positive reception of the workshop and the feedback received, CCM and the facilitators decided to develop this facilitation guide with the aim to share tools and resources with the Mediterranean youth network, enabling them to address this key topic replicating this workshop within their own National Societies.

CCM, as the organizer of the Atlantis Camp, would like to express its gratitude to the MHPSS Hub and the Lebanese Red Cross for their commitment to supporting CCM’s initiatives, as well as to Arz Stephan and Catherine Iskandar for their work in preparing and delivering the workshop and contributing to the development of this material.



Workshop planning

This is an 8-hour workshop designed to be completed in a single day. It combines reflective and practice-based sessions with theory to guide the discussion. The workshop blends small group activities with plenary sessions, always encouraging dialogue and opportunities for participants to share their experiences. The table below shows the workshop agenda as delivered at the Atlantis Youth Camp, provided as a model for your reference.

PFA AGENDA	SESSION	ACTIVITIES & TOPICS
9.00 – 9.20	Warm up	Welcome and Facilitator Introductions (20')
9.20 – 10.00	Presentation & rules	Getting to Know Each Other (20') Establishing Group Values and Safety (20')
10.00 – 11.00	Part I Introduction to PFA and selfcare	1.1 Buddy System – Part 1 (60 minutes)
11.00 – 11.20		Break + debrief with your buddy
11.20 – 13.30	Part II. A quick overview of the PFA	2.1 Expectations and Agenda (10 minutes) 2.2 Buddy System – Part 2 and Feedback (45') 2.3 What is PFA and Why It Matters (20') Break (10') 2.4 Grounding and Breathing Techniques (15') 2.5 Scenario-Based Demonstrations (40') 2.6 Comfort and Support Statements (10') 2.7 Wrap-Up and Closing (15')
13.30 – 15.00	Lunch	
15.00 – 17.00	Part III. PFA practice	3.1 Pairs Exercise – Role-Play Practice
17.00 – 17.30	Part IV. Peer support	4.1 Buddy Reflection and Self-Care Planning 4.2 Group Gratitude Practice



Sessions – Descriptions

The following outlines the activities planned for each session.

Warm up & presentations

Welcome and facilitator introductions (20 min)

- Facilitators introduce themselves and their roles
- Share brief bios and relevant websites and resources [***Annex 1**](#)

Getting to Know Each Other (20 min)

- Word Map Activity: Participants share names and connections.
- Fun Fact: Each participant shares one cultural fact about themselves to build rapport.

Establishing Group Values and Safety (20 min)

- Discuss core values: respect, active listening, confidentiality.
- Explain that discussions may feel challenging; encourage openness and reassurance support.
- Provide trauma warning and outline measures for emotional safety.
- Introduce the Parking Lot for questions or topics to revisit later.

Part I Introduction to PFA and selfcare

1.1 Buddy system – Part 1 (60 min)

Pair participants to build connections and set expectations. The activities include:

- Share basic information (name, National Society, hobbies).
- Reflect: “Is there anything preventing you from being fully present today?”
- Write expectations on sticky notes and post them.

Part II. A quick overview of the PFA

2.1 Expectations and agenda (10 min)

- Present the day’s objectives and schedule.
- Explain what participants will learn and how sessions will flow.

2.2 Buddy system – Part 2 and feedback (45 min)

Continue buddy activity:



Discussion prompts:

- How do you calm yourself when stressed or distressed? Is there a healthier alternative you'd like to try?
- What do you expect from trusted people when stressed?
- How can your buddy support you during challenging moments?

Feedback questions:

- Did you feel comfortable sharing?
- If not, what was challenging for you?

2.3 What is PFA and Why It Matters (20 min)

- Introduce the concept of Psychological First Aid.
- Use agree/disagree statements to spark discussion on its importance. [***Annex 2**](#)

2.4 Grounding and Breathing Techniques (15 min)

Box Breathing: Demonstrate and practice together (3 rounds).

Grounding Exercise (5-4-3-2-1 technique):

- things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you are grateful for

*Encourage use of nearby objects (e.g., water bottle, blanket).

*Explain link to PFA: These tools help both helper and person we help to calm down.

2.5 Scenario-Based Demonstrations (40 min)

Each principle gets ~25 minutes:

- **Setup/Context:** 5 minutes
- **Demonstration:** 10 minutes
- **Group Discussion & Roleplay:** 10 minutes

Scenario 1 – LOOK (Observation & Safety)

- **Context:** Youth evacuated after flooding.
- **Demonstration:** Identify distress signs, assess safety (injuries, isolation, body language).
- **Reflection:** What signs indicate someone needs support?



Scenario 2 – LISTEN (Active Listening)

- **Context:** Young person fleeing violence, saying “I lost everything.”
- **Demonstration:** Listen without judgment, allow silence, use grounding if needed.
- **Reflection:** What phrases felt supportive? What should be avoided?

Scenario 3 – LINK (Connecting to Support)

- **Context:** After wildfire, youth feel lost.
- **Demonstration:** Normalize feelings, link to resources (water, phone charging, helplines), end with calming technique.
- **Reflection:** Brainstorm practical resources in your community.

2.6 Comfort and Support Statements

Examples to use during interactions: [***Annex 3**](#)

- **Safety:** “You are safe here now.”
- **Validation:** “What you are feeling is completely understandable.”
- **Hope:** “Little by little, things can get better.”
- **Empowerment:** “You can decide what feels most helpful for you right now.”

2.7 Wrap-Up and Closing (15 min)

- Quick review of **Look, Listen, Link.** [***Annex 4**](#)
- Remind participants: “You don’t have to solve problems—being present and connecting people to help makes a difference.”
- Final grounding exercise (30 seconds calm breathing).
- Closing circle: Each participant shares one takeaway word.

Part III. PFA practice

3.1 Pairs Exercise – Role-Play Practice (2h 30 min)

Duration: 30 minutes per set of scenarios

This activity was inspired by Danish Red Cross “Psychological First Aid: A practical Session”, 2025.

- Select the 2 to 4 scenarios depending on the time you have, Scenarios are listed [***Annex 5**](#)
- Each scenario will require 30 minutes including preparation, roll play and group debriefing.
- Remind participants: “If you do not feel comfortable role playing you can discuss it together.”
- When you debrief the role play always start with the person who played the role of the affected person.



Instructions:

1. Pair Up:

Participant A holds the card describing the person in distress.
Participant B plays the role of the helper.

2. Preparation (5 minutes):

Review the scenario and think about how you will respond using PFA principles.

3. Role-Play (2-3 minutes):

Act out the interaction based on the scenario.
Focus on applying **Look, Listen, Link** skills.

4. De-role Activity:

After each role-play, do a quick physical activity or “shake it off” exercise to release tension and return to a neutral state.

5. Debrief Together:

Start with the person who played the distressed role.
Share what felt supportive and what could be improved.

Note:

- Include **three fun activities** for de-rolling to keep energy positive (shaking it out, wet socks, dark cloud)
- After completing all scenarios, have a **30-minute wrap-up discussion** to reflect on key learnings.

Part IV. Peer support

4.1 Buddy Reflection and Self-Care Planning

Sit with your buddy and discuss:

- How will you take care of yourself tonight?
- What self-care practices can you commit to for the coming months?
- What will help you maintain emotional balance during challenging times?

Each pair creates a **Self-Care Pledge** and writes it down.

4.2 Group Gratitude Practice

- Gather in a circle.
- Each participant shares **one thing they are grateful for today**.
- Facilitator emphasizes how gratitude supports resilience and mental well-being.



Facilitation tips

For this workshop, it is essential to create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere where participants feel safe and comfortable to share. The facilitator's attitude plays a key role in achieving this.

To ensure an effective and meaningful workshop, the facilitator should:

- *Create a relaxed and safe environment where participants feel comfortable sharing and engaging.*
- *Adopt an assertive yet approachable communication style to build trust and openness.*
- *Encourage active participation, allowing participants to contribute from their own experiences.*
- *Provide space for reflection on personal needs and daily challenges, connecting learning to real-life situations.*
- *Maintain proximity and empathy to strengthen group dynamics and engagement.*
- *Foster experiential learning by making the session interactive and relevant to participants' realities*

*** Facilitators must have strong expertise in Psychological First Aid (PFA) and peer-to-peer support systems. They should have at least one year of experience training others in PFA or leading group psychosocial support activities.*



Annex I

Resources and relevant website

For more resources check the MHPSSHub.org

1. A Guide to Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Link: [A Guide to Psychological First Aid for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies \(PDF\)](#)

When to use it: A foundational resource for practitioners. It is ideal for self-study or as a reference to refresh on PFA principles before and after initial training, or when planning PFA interventions.

2. Psychological First Aid: Module 2 – Basic PFA

Link: [Module 2 – Basic PFA training \(PDF\)](#)

When to use it: Use in facilitated training workshops to teach frontline staff or volunteers how to “Look, Listen, Link,” manage complex reactions, and maintain self-care. [\[pscentre.org\]](http://pscentre.org)

3. Training for Implementers of Child Friendly Spaces

Link: [Child Friendly Spaces toolkit for implementers](#)

When to use it: Ideal for professionals setting up child-friendly spaces—helpful for planning, facilitator training, and implementing safe, psychosocial environments for children.

4. Psychological First Aid for Young Peers: A Training Manual

Link: [Training Manual PDF](#)

Usage: A structured two-day training curriculum designed for youth aged approximately 12–23. It equips young peers with the skills to apply PFA—emphasizing the “Look, Listen, Link” model—and includes facilitator notes, activities, and links to supplementary materials. Use it to train youth leaders in formal or informal settings to support peers in distress and build confidence in basic psychological first aid delivery



5. The Well-being Cards (for adults)

Link: [The Well-being Cards PDF](#)

When to use it: Use these cards for staff or volunteers during stress or exhaustion—each card offers quick exercises (e.g., “when wanting to calm down”) to promote well-being in teams or individually.

6. Well-being Cards for Children

Link: [Well-being Cards for Children \(PDF\)](#)

When to use it: Perfect for guided sessions with children—includes 25 activities to foster self-regulation, relaxation, and emotional awareness; great for check-ins before/after activities.

7. Psychological First Aid for Young Peers: Danish RC Youth Version

Link: [PFA for Young Peers – Danish Red Cross Youth](#)

A peer-to-peer toolkit tailored for youth in Denmark, offering culturally adapted PFA guidance and tools for compassionate listening and practical support.



Annex II

Part II. A quick overview of the PFA

Activity 2.3 What Is / Is Not PFA: True or False Statements

1. PFA is assessing needs and concerns — **True**
2. We shouldn't pressure someone to share details on what happened — **True**
3. PFA is NOT comforting someone who is in distress and helping them feel safe and calm — **False**
4. ONLY addressing immediate basic needs, such as food and water, a blanket or a temporary place to stay — **False**
5. Protecting people from further harm — **True**
6. NOT providing emotional support — **False**
7. Something only professionals do — **False**
8. Helping people access information, services, and social support — **True**
9. NOT professional counselling or therapy — **True**
10. We should ask people to debrief on what exactly happened to them to be able to really help them — **False**
11. We shouldn't ask someone to analyse what has happened to them — **True**
12. We should insist on knowing the feelings and reactions to the event that happened to someone — **False**



Annex III

Part II. A quick overview of the PFA

2.6 Comfort and Support Statements

1. Statements of Comfort & Safety

- "You are safe here now."
- "I am here with you, and I will stay until we find the support you need."
- "It's okay to take your time; there is no rush."
- "Right now, you don't have to handle this alone."

2. Statements of Validation & Understanding

- "What you are feeling is completely understandable after what you went through."
- "It makes sense that you feel this way given the situation."
- "Anyone in your place could feel the same."
- "It's okay to feel overwhelmed; you are not alone."

3. Statements of Encouragement & Hope

- "You've already taken an important step by reaching out/being here."
- "Little by little, things can get better."
- "You are showing strength just by sharing this."
- "There are people who care about you and want to help."

4. Statements of Empowerment & Choice

- "You can decide what feels most helpful for you right now."
- "Is there something that usually helps you feel calmer that we could try together?"
- "You have the right to ask for what you need."
- "Would you like me to share some options, and you choose what works best for you?"

Annex IV

Part II. A quick overview of the PFA

Activity 2.7 Wrap-Up and Closing – Quick review of look- listen - link

PFA Principles

1. LOOK for:

- Information on what has happened and is happening (CONTEXT)
- Who needs help
- Safety and security risks
- Physical injuries
- Immediate basic and practical needs
- Emotional reactions (SHOCK)

2. LISTEN refers to how the helper:

- Approaches someone
- Introduces oneself
- Take consent
- Pays attention and listens actively
- Calms the person in distress (eg: breathing exercise)
- Encouraging/supporting statements
- Accepts others' feelings
- Asks about needs and concerns
- Helps the person(s) in distress find solutions to their immediate needs and problems.
- Do not make any promises
- Be gentle and genuine
- Don't be afraid of silence



3. LINK is helping people:

- Link to oneself
- Access information
- Connect with loved ones and social support
- Tackle practical problems
- Access services and other help (E.g.: Tracing and Disaster Management DM for shelter)



Annex V

PFA and Peer Support Scenarios

These scenarios were inspired by Danish Red Cross “Psychological First Aid: A practical Session”, 2025.

Scenario 1 – Gender-Based Violence

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place during a women's group session on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) awareness and protection strategies organized by the Red Cross. The facilitator introduces a segment on intimate partner violence, highlighting signs of emotional and physical abuse. At this moment, one participant, Vanessa (28 years old), becomes visibly distressed, begins crying quietly, and whispers to the woman next to her that she “can't breathe.” The discussion has triggered painful memories of her ongoing abuse at home.

Scenario 1. Person in Distress (Role Card)

Imagine you are Vanessa, a 28-year-old married woman with two children. During the GBV awareness session, the topic of intimate partner violence reminds you of your own reality. You feel overwhelmed, start trembling, and quietly whisper to the woman beside you that you can't breathe.

When the facilitator/helper approaches you, you express yourself at your own pace and may reveal:

“This is too much for me... I can't handle it. At home... it's not safe. He shouts at me, insults me... sometimes he hits me. I don't know what to do. I feel trapped. I'm scared for myself and my children.”

Scenario 1. Helper (Role Card)

Imagine you are the facilitator/helper in the GBV awareness session. You notice Vanessa's distress and decide to approach her.

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- You notice Vanessa withdrawing, trembling, and avoiding eye contact.
- The environment is safe (no immediate threat), but the emotional distress is high.
- You discreetly approach her, ensuring privacy without drawing attention from the whole group.

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- You introduce yourself softly and check if she would like to step outside for fresh air.
- You sit with her in a calm corner, maintaining a supportive presence.
- You normalise feelings “I can see that this is very difficult for you. You're not alone here.”
-



- You allow her to share at her own pace without pressuring. She reveals she has been experiencing verbal and physical abuse from her husband for several years.

3. **LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)**

- You acknowledge her strength for attending the session.
- You provide **practical information (that you have prepared before the start of the session in consultation with the PGI focal point)**:
 - o Remind her she is in a safe space now.
 - o Share with her the GBV hotline if she wants to.
 - o Ask if she has someone she trusts (family member/friend) for emotional support.
- Before rejoining or leaving, you ensure she feels calmer and oriented. You check if she would like to take a break or sit in a quiet space.

Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Do no harm:** Respect confidentiality, don't push her to disclose details.
- **Respect her pace & choices:** Empower her, don't pressure decisions.
- **Confidential referral:** Only connect her to services with her consent.
- **Safety first:** Never confront the perpetrator or share her situation without her permission.

Scenario 2 – Child-Headed Household

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place near the entrance of a community centre where psychosocial support sessions are held. Ahmad, a 17-year-old participant, is the head of his household and sole caregiver for his younger brother (10 years old) after losing both parents in the recent armed conflict. On his way to attend the session, Ahmad tripped, fell, and broke his ankle. He is now on the floor in pain, crying, and visibly distressed, not only from the injury but also from the overwhelming burden of caring for his younger brother.

Scenario 2. Person in Distress (Role Card)

You are Ahmad, 17 years old. You lost your parents in the conflict and now care for your younger brother. You work irregular jobs to provide for him, but you are under constant stress. Today, you fell and broke your ankle, leaving you in pain and terrified of how you will manage everything.

When the helper approaches you, you say things like:

"It hurts so much... I can't move. What will happen to my brother if I can't work? We don't have anyone else. How are we going to eat? I feel like I'm failing him. I can't do this anymore..."



Scenario 2. Helper (Role Card)

You are a Red Cross volunteer/helper who notices Ahmad on the ground in pain. Your role is to provide immediate psychosocial first aid, prioritizing medical care for his broken ankle, while also supporting his emotional needs

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Quickly assess the scene for safety (ensure there is no ongoing danger).
- Notice Ahmad's visible injury, pain, and distress.
- Call or signal immediately for medical assistance (first aid team, ambulance, or health professional). Stay with him until help arrives.

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Reassure Ahmad while waiting for medical help: "I've called for help, they're on the way. You're not alone. I'll stay with you."
- Use a calm, steady tone to reduce his panic.
- Allow him to express his worries about his brother, listening without judgment.
- Acknowledge his feelings: "I hear how scared you are for your brother. It must feel overwhelming."

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- Ensure he receives proper medical care for his ankle immediately.
- Take Ahmad's ascent and link him to a social worker for ongoing support and case management.
- Ask if there's someone who can temporarily care for his younger brother.
- Provide information about available child protection and social services that could support both him and his sibling.
- Reassure him that he and his brother are not alone and that support is available beyond this moment.

Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Do No Harm:** Maintain confidentiality at all times and avoid pressuring Ahmad to share details he is not ready to disclose.
- **Respect Pace & Choices:** Empower Ahmad to make decisions about referrals or follow-up support. Always obtain his verbal consent (ascent) before taking any action on his behalf.
- **Child Protection Protocols:** Ensure all referral pathways are safe, appropriate, and compliant with child protection standards for minors.
- **Safety First:** Avoid making promises that cannot be fulfilled (e.g., financial assistance), but clearly inform him about available support services.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Recognize Ahmad's resilience and effort as a caregiver, treating him without judgment and valuing his perspective.



Scenario 3 – Child Early Marriage

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place during a school lunch break in a rural community. The teacher has just announced an upcoming school trip. While most students are excited and talking about it, Laura becomes quiet, lowers her gaze, and looks sad. When her favorite teacher asks her why she doesn't seem happy, Laura whispers that she won't be able to join because her parents are preparing for her marriage. This revelation leaves her feeling hopeless and distressed. ☹

Scenario 3. Person in Distress (Role Card)

Imagine You are Laura, a 16-year-old student who lives with her family in a rural community. Your parents recently told you they are arranging your marriage soon, and because of this, you won't be allowed to join the upcoming school trip. You feel torn between your dreams of continuing school and your family's expectations.

When your friend approaches you, you may express yourself by saying things like:

"I can't go on the trip... my parents said I have to marry soon. I don't want this. I love school and I want to stay, but I don't think I have a choice. I feel so hopeless."

Scenario 3. Helper (Role Card)

You are Laura's friend who notices Laura's sadness after the school trip announcement. Your role is to support her.

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Notice that while her peers are excited, Laura is quiet, avoiding eye contact, and looks distressed.
- Ensure a private and safe setting before approaching her.
- Show calm, non-judgmental body language.

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Approach gently: "I noticed you seemed upset after the trip announcement. Do you want to talk?"
- Offer space for her to share at her own pace.
- Use reflective listening: "It sounds like this situation feels very heavy and unfair for you."
- Validate her emotions and reassure her she is not alone.

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- Acknowledge her courage in speaking about such a sensitive issue.
- With her ascent, connect her to a school counselor, child protection focal point, or a social worker.
- Share safe options and referral pathways that respect her rights as a minor.
- Remind her she has support and that she is not alone in facing this.



Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Do No Harm:** Maintain confidentiality; avoid forcing Laura to share more than she is comfortable with.
- **Respect Pace & Choices:** Allow her to decide if and how she wants to be referred for support. Always seek her ascent before any action.
- **Child Protection Protocols:** Ensure referrals follow safe, age-appropriate, and protective procedures.
- **Safety First:** Avoid making promises you cannot keep (e.g., preventing the marriage directly), but provide clear, realistic support options.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Recognize Laura's bravery in speaking up, and treat her concerns with empathy and without judgment.

Scenario 4 – Academic Stress

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place during an after-school support session where students are preparing for an upcoming exam. Sam, a 19-year-old student, has been struggling to balance work and study. He knows that if he fails the exam, he will lose the financial support that allows him to continue his education. On top of this, his father is seriously ill with cancer, adding to his stress and emotional burden.

During the exam preparation exercise, Sam starts breathing heavily, tapping his foot repeatedly, and whispers to a friend, "I'm going to fail. I can't do this." He then puts his head down on the table, feeling overwhelmed.

Scenario 4. Person in Distress (Role Card)

Imagine You are Sam, 19 years old. You are under intense pressure to succeed in your studies because failing would mean losing your financial support. At the same time, you are deeply worried about your father's illness. You feel trapped, anxious, and overwhelmed, and the thought of failing the exam makes you panic.

When your friend approaches you, you may express your feelings by saying:

"I can't do this... if I fail, I'll lose my scholarship. My dad is sick, I'm working and studying, and it's too much. I just want to give up."

Scenario 4. Helper (Role Card)

Imagine you are Sam's close friend sitting next to him. You notice he's panicking and struggling to breathe. Your role is to be supportive

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Notice Sam's heavy breathing, tapping, and withdrawn posture.
- Recognize that he is overwhelmed.
- Create a small private moment, e.g., whisper or step outside with him.



2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Ask gently: "Hey, I see you're not okay. Want to step outside for a bit?"
- Stay calm and present. Let him vent without cutting him off.
- Reflect back: "It sounds like you're carrying way too much: school, work, your dad's illness."
- Show empathy: "That sounds really hard. Anyone would feel overwhelmed in your shoes."

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- Suggest simple coping strategies: "Let's take a few deep breaths together before we go back in."
- Encourage him to reach out: "Have you thought about talking with the school counselor or someone you trust? I can go with you if you want."
- Offer ongoing friendship support: "I'm here for you. You don't have to carry all of this alone."

Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Do No Harm:** Keep what Sam shares private; don't gossip.
- **Respect Pace & Choices:** Don't push him—let him decide if he wants help from others.
- **Consent:** If you suggest speaking to a counselor or adult, make sure Sam agrees.
- **Safety First:** If Sam seems at risk of self-harm, encourage him to seek urgent support from a trusted adult or professional.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Treat him with compassion, validating his strength despite his struggles.

Scenario 5 – Bereaved by Suicide

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place in a family home. Alex, 22 years old, has just returned from university after receiving a sudden call to "come home quickly." When he arrives, a social worker gently sits down with him and informs him that his older brother has died by suicide.

Scenario 5. Person in Distress (Role Card)

Imagine you are Alex, 19 years old. You are in shock after the social worker informed you that your brother has died by suicide. You feel overwhelmed, guilty, and deeply sad. You may say things like:

"No... this can't be true. He wouldn't do this." "Why didn't I see it coming? Maybe I could have stopped him." "He left me without saying goodbye. I keep asking myself if it was my fault."

Scenario 5. Helper (Role Card)

You are the social worker who has just informed Alex about his brother's death. Your role is to provide support.



PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Observe Alex's immediate reaction, shock, crying, trembling.
- Ensure privacy and a calm environment (sit with him away from others if needed).
- Stay present, showing calm body language.

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Allow Alex to express disbelief and guilt without interrupting.
- Use gentle, non-stigmatizing language: "I am so sorry, Alex. Your brother died by suicide."
- Offer presence: "I can see how painful this is. You don't have to go through this alone."
- Validate feelings: "It's very common to ask yourself 'why' or 'what if' after losing someone this way. It doesn't mean it was your fault."

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- Ground him: "Would you like a glass of water or to sit somewhere quieter for a moment?"
- Encourage support from trusted family/friends: "Is there someone close you'd like me to call to be with you right now?"
- Provide information (if appropriate): "When you feel ready, I can share some resources and support services that can help you and your family through this."
- Offer ongoing support: "I will stay with you until you feel calmer."

Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Use Non-Stigmatizing Language:** Say "died by suicide," never words that suggest blame or sin.
- **Do No Harm:** Deliver the news gently, maintain confidentiality, and don't push him to talk more than he wants.
- **Respect Pace & Choices:** Let Alex decide if he wants someone else present or if he wants to sit quietly.
- **Safety First:** Monitor for risk of self-harm; if he shows signs, ensure urgent follow-up care.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Acknowledge the shock and pain of this sudden loss, and affirm his strength in receiving such devastating news.

Scenario 6– Witnessing Fraud at Work

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place in the office staff room. Karim, 34 years old, has been working long overtime hours due to his supervisor's high demands. For months, he has been aware of fraudulent practices happening in the workplace but felt too afraid to speak up. Today, his colleague notices that Karim, normally cheerful, is sitting alone, looking withdrawn and unusually sad.



Scenario 6. Person in Distress (Role Card)

Imagine you are Karim, 34 years old. You have been carrying the burden of knowing about fraud at work and the stress is overwhelming you. You may say things like:

“I can’t keep this inside anymore. I’ve seen things happening here that aren’t right.” “I was too scared to say anything before, but it’s eating me up.” “I don’t even know what to do anymore. Everything feels like it’s falling apart.”

Scenario 6. Helper (Role Card)

You are Karim’s colleague. You notice his sadness and recognize that something is wrong. Your role is to be supportive and help him think of safe, constructive next steps.

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Notice Karim’s change in mood, withdrawn, sad, not his usual self.
- Recognize that his distress may be linked to workplace stress or something deeper.
- Ensure privacy by approaching him discreetly.

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Ask gently: “I noticed you seem down today. Do you want to talk about what’s on your mind?”
- Let him share at his own pace without interrupting.
- Show empathy: “That must feel really heavy to carry alone.”
- Reassure: “It’s understandable to feel scared. Many people struggle when they see things that feel wrong at work.”

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- Encourage safe next steps: “If you feel ready, you could talk to your supervisor about your concerns.”
- Suggest organizational channels: “HR can also guide you on the proper procedure if you’re unsure.”
- Remind him of workplace safeguarding policies: “There are systems in place to protect staff who raise concerns—you don’t have to deal with this alone.”
- Offer continued support: “I can go with you if you decide to speak to someone.”

Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Do No Harm:** Keep Karim’s disclosure confidential; don’t spread rumors.
- **Respect Pace & Choices:** Let him decide if, when, and how he wants to report the fraud.
- **Confidential Referral:** Only share concerns with appropriate safeguarding channels and with Karim’s consent.
- **Safety First:** Never confront the alleged perpetrator directly; ensure Karim understands safe reporting mechanisms.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Acknowledge Karim’s integrity and courage for speaking up, without judgment for his earlier silence.



Scenario 7– Loss and Grief

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place in a neighborhood severely affected by an earthquake. Sandra, 14 years old, has just returned to where her house once stood. She sees only collapsed rubble and scattered belongings. Overwhelmed, she stands silently, tears running down her face, avoiding eye contact with others. A National Society worker, part of a field team conducting a needs assessment, notices her distress and approaches.

Scenario 7. Person in Distress (Role Card)

Imagine you are Sandra, 14 years old. You have just lost your home and cannot find your parents or siblings. You may say things like:

“Everything is gone. It feels like a nightmare. I keep hoping I’ll wake up and it’ll all be okay.”
“I don’t know how to start over. Where do I even begin?” “I’m trying to stay strong for my family, but it’s so hard.” “I don’t know how we’ll ever recover from this. It’s like a part of me has been taken away.” “I just want things to go back to how they were before. Is that too much to ask?”

Scenario 7. Helper (Role Card)

You are a National Society worker conducting a needs assessment with your colleagues in an earthquake-affected neighborhood. You notice Sandra staring at the ruins of her home, visibly shaken and in distress. Your role is to provide immediate psychological first aid through presence, active listening, and linking her to appropriate support.

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Notice Sandra’s withdrawn posture, tears, and avoidance of eye contact.
- Recognize she may be in shock and grieving multiple losses.
- Ensure a safe and calm environment to talk (away from noise or chaos).

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Approach gently: “I see you’re standing here, it looks like this is very hard for you. Would you like to talk?”
- Allow her to share at her own pace; don’t force details.
- Show empathy: “It makes sense to feel this way after losing so much.”
- Reassure: “You don’t have to go through this alone. Many others are here to support you.”

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- Connect her with trusted neighbors, relatives, or other community members nearby.
- Ensure she knows about immediate services: shelter, food, water, and child-safe spaces.
- If her family remains missing, refer to child protection services or local authorities (police, tracing services).
- Encourage ongoing support: “I will let my colleagues know so we can help you find a safe place to stay tonight.”



Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Do No Harm:** Avoid making promises (e.g., that her family will be found).
- Respect Pace & Choices: Let Sandra express emotions in her own way; don't push her to stop crying or "be strong."
- **Child Safeguarding:** Ensure referrals follow child protection protocols.
- **Confidentiality:** Share her information only with relevant services needed to keep her safe.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Treat Sandra with empathy, acknowledging her pain and resilience.

Scenario 8 – Loss and Grief

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place in the office. A colleague has recently returned to work after taking a few days off. S/he is mourning the recent loss of a close family member. S/he appears absent and is struggling to focus on his/her tasks. Another colleague enters the room and notices the s/he seems unsettled and distracted.

Scenario 8. Person in Distress (Role Card)

You have just returned to work after losing someone very close to you. You're trying to go back to normal, but it feels impossible. You're easily distracted, struggling to focus, and feel drained.

You don't really feel like talking, but when a colleague asks, you open up:

"I thought coming back to work would help me feel normal again, but nothing feels normal. I keep thinking about my uncle. It's like the world is moving on, but I'm stuck."

Scenario 8. Helper (Role Card)

You walk into the office room and notice your colleague sitting quietly, barely touching their cup of tea. S/he seems tired and extremely sad. You gently ask how s/he/hi is doing.

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Notice your colleague's tired expression, silence, and difficulty focusing.
- Recognize signs of grief and emotional exhaustion.
- Ensure a quiet, private moment to speak (avoid crowded areas).

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Gently ask: "I can see it's been really tough for you. Do you feel like talking?"
- Allow them to share only as much as they want. Show empathy: "It sounds like you're carrying a lot right now, and it's normal to feel this way after losing someone close."
- Reassure: "It's okay if work doesn't feel normal yet, grief takes time."

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- Encourage small steps: "If you need to take things slowly at work, that's completely fine."



- Suggest support: "Sometimes talking to HR or a trusted supervisor about adjusting workload can help."
- Mention available resources: peer support, employee assistance programs, or professional counseling if accessible.
- Offer continued presence: "I'm here if you ever want to talk or even just sit together."

Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Do No Harm:** Avoid minimizing their grief or pushing them to "move on."
- **Respect Pace & Choices:** Let them decide how much they want to share; silence is also valid.
- **Confidentiality:** Keep their disclosure private unless they consent to share with HR or a manager.
- **Safety First:** Be alert for signs of severe distress (e.g., hopelessness, inability to cope) and gently encourage professional support if needed.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Acknowledge their strength in returning to work despite their loss; treat them with compassion and patience.

Scenario 9 – Substance Use and Harassment

Scene Description Card:

This roleplay takes place at Mia's university. Mia, 24 years old, recently went through a violent episode at home where her father physically assaulted her. She has been struggling with substance use and, after a recent party where she drank heavily and took drugs, she was harassed by someone. Now, Mia is terrified that she might be pregnant. She confides in her close friend, who becomes the helper in this scenario.

Scenario 9. Person in Distress (Role Card)

Imagine you are Mia, 24 years old. You've experienced violence at home, used alcohol and drugs at a recent party, and were harassed. Now you're overwhelmed with fear and confusion, worried you might be pregnant. You feel ashamed, scared, and unsure who to trust. You might say things like:

- o "I don't even know where to start... everything's a mess."
- o "That night I drank too much, and someone harassed me. What if I'm pregnant?"
- o "I feel so scared. I can't tell my family if my dad finds out, he'll beat me to death."
- o "I don't know who can help me or what to do next."

Scenario 9. Helper (Role Card)

Imagine you are Mia's trusted friend. She just confided in you about the assault, her fear of pregnancy, and her family situation. Your role is to listen without judgment, offer emotional support, and help her think about safe, practical next steps.

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Notice Mia's visible distress and fear.
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- Ensure the conversation happens in a safe, private place where her father or others cannot overhear.
- Recognize that she is at risk of further violence if her father finds out.

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Reassure: "I can see how frightening this feels for you." Avoid any blame regarding her drinking or drug use. Let her speak at her own pace; acknowledge: "It's very brave that you're sharing this with me." Remind her clearly: "What happened is not your fault." Validate her fear about her father: "Your safety is the most important thing right now."

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- **Medical care:** Encourage her to seek urgent Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) services, which can include pregnancy testing, post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV, STI treatment, and emergency contraception (if within the timeframe).
- **Safety concerns:** Explore safe options— "I hear your fear about your father. We can think together about how you can access care without him knowing."
- **Psychosocial support:** Suggest confidential referrals (women's helpline, PGI/GBV focal point, or trusted social worker). Stress that no one will inform her father without her consent.
- **Trusted support:** Ask if she has someone safe (friend, relative, professional) she trusts who can accompany her.
- **Empowerment:** Remind her: "You don't have to go through this alone. There are safe services designed to help in exactly this kind of situation."

Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Do No Harm:** Avoid judgment or blame. Never confront the perpetrator or father.
- **Respect Pace & Choices:** Let Mia choose what actions she wants to take; don't pressure her.
- **Confidentiality:** Protect her privacy; do not share her situation without her explicit consent.
- **Safety First:** Recognize the serious risk of honor-based violence from her father; ensure any referrals prioritize her protection.
- **Survivor-Centered Approach:** Use non-judgmental language and reinforce that what happened is not her fault.
- **Medical Priority:** Stress the importance of urgent CMR services while respecting her decision-making and fears.
- **Dignity & Respect:** Acknowledge Mia's courage in speaking up despite shame and fear.

Scenario 10 – Panic Attack

Scene Description Card:

Marc, 32 years old, is on a Red Cross dispatch mission with his colleague. During the task, Marc suddenly starts breathing heavily, holding his chest, trembling, and seems disoriented. He is experiencing a panic attack. His colleague (the helper) notices his distress and steps in to support him.



Scenario 10. Person in Distress (Role Card)

Imagine you are Marc, a 32-year-old Red Cross volunteer. During the dispatch, you suddenly feel overwhelmed, your chest is tight, your breathing becomes fast, and you feel like you're losing control. You panic and say things like:

"I can't breathe... something's wrong..." "I feel like I'm going to die!" "I can't do this anymore, I'm going crazy..."

Scenario 10. Helper (Role Card)

You are Marc's colleague on dispatch. You notice he is having difficulty breathing, sweating, and panicking. You support him.

PFA Response (based on IFRC Look – Listen – Link model)

1. LOOK (Check for Safety and Observe Needs)

- Notice Marc's breathing and visible panic symptoms.
- Check surroundings – ensure he's safe and not at risk of physical harm.

2. LISTEN (Offer Comfort and Active Listening)

- Stay calm, speak in a steady, reassuring tone.
- Say his name to ground him.
- Encourage slow breathing together: "Let's try to breathe slowly together... in through the nose, out through the mouth." (or another grounding exercise)
- Acknowledge his feelings without judgment: "I can see you're really scared right now. You're not alone."
- Remind him it's not his fault and that panic attacks can happen to anyone.

3. LINK (Help Access Support and Coping Resources)

- If needed, suggest a short break away from the stressful situation.
- Remind him that panic attacks, though scary, are not life-threatening.
- Encourage him to seek professional support later (mental health professional).
- If attacks repeat or worsen, guide him toward referral pathways.

Key Ethical Considerations (per IFRC guidelines)

- **Stay calm yourself:** your calmness helps ground Marc.
- Avoid saying things like "calm down" or "don't be scared." Instead, validate his experience.
- **Use grounding techniques** if breathing isn't enough (ask him to focus on 5 things he can see, 4 he can touch, 3 he can hear...).
- **Respect confidentiality:** don't share about his panic attack unless for his safety or with his consent.
- After the situation stabilizes, check in with him gently and offer ongoing peer support.