

Psychological First Aid is a timely and much-needed resource, particularly for the youth on campuses across Pakistan. At a time when mental health challenges are on the rise, this book offers practical guidance and compassionate tools to address emotional and psychological crises. It's true value lies in enabling educators and learners to recognize early signs of mental distress. Timely interventions not only enhance the quality of life but, in many cases, can be life-saving. By bridging the gap between awareness and action, Sadia Nawaz made a commendable contribution to the field of mental health advocacy and care. This book is more than just a guide, it is a call to build safer, more supportive academic environments where young people can thrive. A sincere commendation goes to the BNU for publishing a resource that will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on the well-being of students and communities alike.

Tariq H. Cheema, MD

Executive Director

Alight (formerly American refugee
Committee)

This is an impressive and thorough manuscript, which is evidence based and demonstrative of a complete understanding of the task the author is attempting to understand and prepare for. There is a sound rationale and a format and strategy to both implement and review the efforts; ethics to consider and honor, a time to debrief, and a time to train and practice. Sadia puts at the top of her priorities, most importantly, empathy for those undergoing the crisis or possible trauma. She also includes in her reflections care for those doing the intervening/helping, and for the university family as a whole. In my opinion, this is an excellent document. The difficult task is always the implementation, and with the right attitude and level of commitment from clinicians, administrators, and university employees. This guide will certainly attract the right kinds of individuals who share the author's and BNU's vision.

Dr Peter Demuth

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and Author, Demuth Psychological
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CAMPUS CARE: A GUIDE TO PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID FOR UNIVERSITIES IN PAKISTAN



CAMPUS CARE: A GUIDE TO
***PSYCHOLOGICAL
FIRST AID***

FOR UNIVERSITIES IN PAKISTAN

Sadia Nawaz Kahoot

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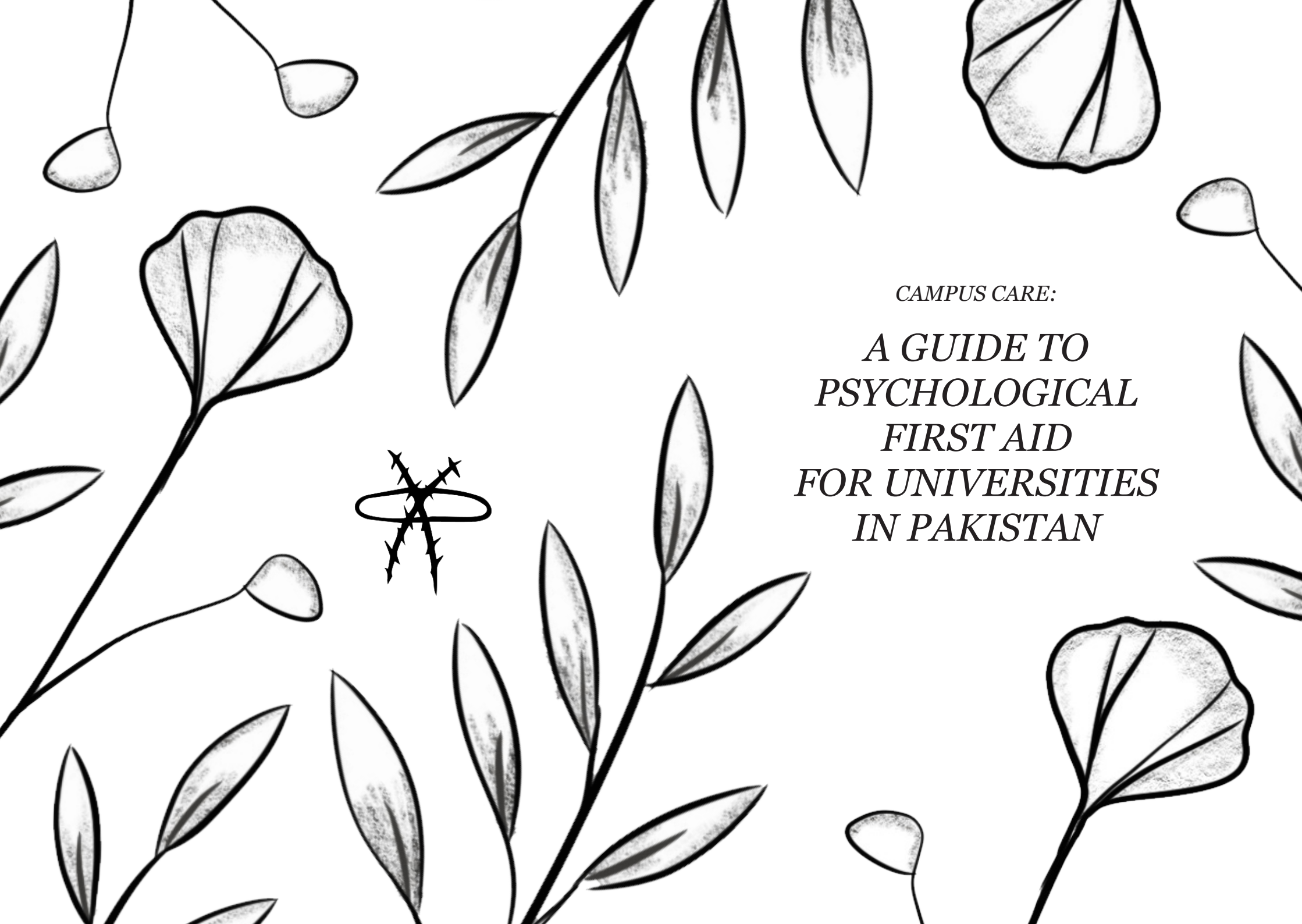
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The background features a black and white botanical illustration. It includes several stems with leaves of various shapes and sizes, some with prominent veins. There are also small, teardrop-shaped elements that look like buds or seeds. A central element is a stylized, spiky plant or flower head. The overall style is clean and artistic.

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Our engaging training program will help you provide the essential psychological support during critical situations. This will also allow your faculty, staff and students to build resilience and acquire skills that can address tough challenges for themselves and others around them.



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I wish to express my profound appreciation to Vice Chancellor Dr. Moeed W. Yusuf, whose visionary leadership and steadfast support were instrumental in the development of this manual. I also extend my recognition to my colleague, Nooria Shiraz, for her contribution and assistance in the development of this guidebook. I would like to give credit to Ms. Haneen Mirza for her thoughtful drawing illustrations that make this book aesthetically pleasant. My deepest gratitude is reserved for my family, whose unwavering encouragement and understanding have been indispensable throughout this endeavour.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 PFA: Introduction and Overview	1-8
Chapter 2 PFA-U: The 3 W's (Who, When and Where)	9-14
Chapter 3 Essential Skills and Qualities of First Responders who offer PFA-U	15-22
Chapter 4 PFA-U Action Principles	23-40
Chapter 5 Crisis Response Team (CRT)	41-44
Chapter 6 Ethical Guidelines	45-48
Chapter 7 Case Scenarios	49-60
Chapter 8 Self-Care for First Responders	61-66
References	67-70
Appendices	71-76

FOREWORD

In a world where the frequency of adverse events is on the rise, the need for compassionate and effective care is greater than ever. Life is inherently unpredictable, which urges us to be prepared for any unnecessary and unpleasant situation. As a Clinical Psychologist and Counselor, who has been working closely with university community since quite some time, I have seen the life-changing impact that timely psychological support can have on individual's lives who are going through dreadful moments. This book on Psychological First Aid for Universities in Pakistan will help others to traverse smoothly in routine life after a traumatic experience.

The principles of PFA-U are based on empathy, kindness and the innate human strength to heal. Being an alumnus of Beaconhouse National University, an institute that gave me the pedagogical rigor to serve the academic community in specific and the society in general, I feel beholden to give back what I have learned from this prestigious institute.

Every journey starts with a single step, and psychological first aid for universities is that first step to save anyone on campus who is in overwhelming distress from further harm and pave the way for speedy recovery. I just hope that through this book people get equipped with tools to build a more compassionate and resilient university community.

Let's begin the journey of empathy, support and resilience!

Sadia Nawaz Kahoot

Head of Centre for Counseling and Psychological Well-being (CCPW)
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Introduction and Overview



What is meant by Psychological First Aid (PFA)

PFA is a scientifically sound approach that is grounded with human resilience, person-to-person connection to alleviate stress symptoms and help in a smooth recovery after a tragedy strikes. It could be of any kind and magnitude whether it's a natural disaster, a personal crisis, a public health issue or a traumatic situation, psychological first aid aims to alleviate the emotional and mental struggles. At its core, PFA serves as a psychosocial support mechanism designed to assist individuals impacted by emergencies, disasters, or distressing events. It is a compassionate instrument that helps individuals in distress feel acknowledged and accepted, empowering them to manage their challenges and receive practical assistance. The process involves actively listening to delineate their needs, assessing the nature of the support required, facilitating positive coping strategies, providing relevant information, and connecting them to appropriate services (Guidelines on Psychological First Aid (PFA), Guidebook for Humanitarian Workers; Everly et al. 2022)

Mental well-being has gained significant importance among educational institutions since post COVID-19. We now know that we need to be prepared for all the unforeseen situations that can put university community at risk. Sometimes seemingly low emergency situations can trigger a major psychological crisis. Young adults enrolling in universities to pursue their career education may go through different kinds of tragic incidents like death, abuse, illness, any kind of violence, accidents, which can have a protracted negative impact on their mental health and might put them at risk of developing drastic mental health issues. (Sabra, et al., 2023).

Students spend a substantial amount of time in university and traverse through their professional studies while battling with diverse mental, emotional and psychological challenges. These challenges like academic stress, peer pressure, interpersonal issues and relationship struggles along with pre-existing negative life experiences that have been mentioned earlier, makes them vulnerable to go through emotional and mental breakdowns. This makes it more crucial to have an up-to-date Psychological First Aid (PFA) plan that is easily implementable and can be understood by everyone in the university community.

Recent studies reveal that the accurate know-how of PFA remarkably elevates the quality of psychosocial response and PFA skills, required to support people experiencing high levels of distress, eventually improving their self-efficacy and reinforcing resilience (Wang, et al., 2021). Rudimentary knowledge regarding taking care of people going through perilous situations, like severe depression, suicidal and/or self-harming intentions or thoughts, is vitally important for everyone in the university community. Every member of the fraternity can get themselves equipped with this basic and essential skillset that enables them to recognise and resolve any mental health emergency that affects them or others around them on campus. This program is also helpful in generating an atmosphere of acceptance towards mental health issues in the community and garners support for everyone who wants to get professional assistance for their mental health struggles of any kind. It's time that we start breaking the taboos around conditions like mania, depression, self-harm, suicidal tendencies, panic attacks, psychotic break and anxiety.

What Is Psychological First Aid for Universities (PFA-U)?

Beaconhouse National University has developed and adopted a comprehensive PFA program that is based on the global standards and guidelines of training individuals on Psychological First Aid and is also aligned with our cultural and social norms. Psychological First Aid for Universities (PFA-U) has foundations that are empirically built to help students, staff, faculty and other auxiliary personnel right after the occurrence of any emergency situation in universities. PFA-U is built to lower the intensity of grave distress as a result of any traumatic incident that happens on campus and works on the positive coping and adaptive functioning of the affectee(s). The principles and techniques of BNU's PFA-U meet the following core standards:

1. Aligned with evidence-based research on immediate risks and support right after a traumatic event.
2. Consistent and mindful of the university policies, culture and ethical decorum of university community.
3. Easy to adopt and apply for both private and public sector universities.
4. Appropriate for developing lifesaving skills for all sorts of academic and non-academic bodies across the university.
5. Culturally-informed and flexible in terms of delivery.

PFA-U caters to the broad range of immediate reactions for e.g., emotional, physical, cognitive and behavioral that members of the university community go through after a crisis. Sometimes these reactions can hinder the individual's natural coping capacity and produces intense distress. During these times, support from a well-informed, well-trained and a compassionate person can help the victim recover from such reactions. PFA-U also helps to attenuate the onset of any probable issues related to mental health or existing challenges in recovery from a debilitating psychological problem, by recognizing the signs and symptoms among individuals that may require extended professional support and connecting them to necessary services.

The adaptability of PFA to diverse populations is another critical aspect highlighted by research. PFA's culturally sensitive and flexible approach ensures that the needs of varied student groups are effectively addressed. This inclusivity enhances the overall efficacy of the intervention, making it a valuable tool in diverse university environments (McNally et al., 2014).

Moreover, PFA facilitates the recovery and reintegration of individuals affected by crises. By assisting with the processing of traumatic experiences and connecting individuals to further support services, PFA aids in a smoother transition back into academic and social settings (Litz et al., 2018). This structured support not only helps individuals recover but also enhances the institution's preparedness for managing future crises.

Overall, integrating PFA into university crisis response plans is essential for supporting the mental health and well-being of the academic community. Research highlights that a structured approach to psychological support not only improves immediate crisis response but also fosters a more resilient and prepared university environment (Smith et al., 2019).

Population Exposure Model

Any traumatic event has the power to influence not only those who are present at the site of the event but also those who may be far away. Such situations can cause a rippling effect that can have an impact on the outside community as well. Any member of the community whether specific or general can be significantly affected by a crisis situation under any of the following conditions:

- 1. Direct exposure:** When the affected person is the direct receiver of the crisis such as, a physical injury, accident, sexual assault, witnessing the passing away or a serious injury of someone dear, a roommate, class-fellow, faculty, staff, friend etc.
- 2. Indirect exposure:** When the exposure to trauma is indirect and the affected individual is not directly exposed to it. For example, a person might become traumatised when he/she comes to know about a friend, or teacher, batchmate or roommate has been missing, passed away, gotten injured following a crisis event.
- 3. Tragedy strikes someone known:** One can suffer through grief due to the loss of someone they might have a connection with like someone they know suffers a loss of a loved one or gets seriously injured. The loss or damage of property or possessions due to accidents, natural or man-made disaster such as earthquake, theft, structural fire or flood etc.
- 4. Tragedy strikes someone unknown:** A person can also get affected due to the suffering of someone else who might have something in common with them. For example, students of other universities might get adversely affected by a tragedy occurred in a neighbouring university or college because they share the status of “student” with them.
- 5. Identifies with the Affected Group:** When an individual identifies with the victim group in any way but is not directly related to them. For example, an international student might get traumatised due to a massive tragedy occurred in their homeland.

Why Provide Psychological First Aid in Universities?

1. A Safe and Healthier Environment

Educational institutions are a place for students where they spend majority of their daytime. Many students live in on-campus residence hence it makes universities their second home. Universities are also a key fount of support for the students and staff. They can provide a substantial psychosocial support to each other. In many ways, the campus community is the “first and last responders” for anyone who is in crisis. Students look up to their faculty and staff for support and guidance and also help each other to cope with distressful situations. Parents also expect a maximum safe environment to be provided by the university administration to their children and has the capacity to stabilize the situation. Hence, its crucial to make the campuses safe and healthy to nurture the physical, psychological and emotional well-being of every member of the university community.

2. Preparedness

All university staff or at least most of them must be prepared to deal with psychological emergencies. It is expected by the university administration to be fully prepared to respond to all sorts of low impact/high frequency events that they face frequently and during specific situations like exams and key performance activities. The day-to-day crisis events which are usually smaller scale, do not garner national headlines but has the capacity to deeply impact the mental well-being of individuals and also cause disruption in the environment. There’s a broad range of such events, some of which are; self-harm, bullying, peer victimization, intense social phobia, violence, injuries, accidents and emotional or mental breakdowns. Preparedness includes (1) keeping a thorough response and recuperation strategy, (2) having trained personnels for resolving the immediate and extended needs of the affected individuals, (3) Repeated practicing of the PFA protocols, and (4) continued assessment and upgradation of program components as per the standardized operational standards of the university. This preparedness also equips people with a life skill that they can use to handle emergencies and be helpful to those in need.

3. Improved Learning

Any sort of crisis in educational institutes can hinder the educational and communal achievements of students. An efficacious mental well-being and psychosocial recovery plan which has interventional strategies like PFA-U,

helps to restore the disrupted learning environment. Students get frequently adversely affected by such events and it reflects in their declining social and academic performance. Any such services offered by the university that provide psychosocial and mental health support, aid the academic mission of the university and strengthens its chances to contribute to the betterment of the society in general.

4. Addressing Trauma-related Impact

Crisis induced distress can lead to an extended impact on any affected individual if left untreated. Exposure to traumatic experiences can put the affectee to intense mental health issues. These unresolved mental health problems can lead to potential higher drop-outs rates, increased absenteeism, disturbed peer relationships, decreased academic performance. Thus, university mental health initiatives such as PFA-U are not just crucially effective for the better mental health of students, staff and faculty but are also very important for the general well-being and personal growth of the community.

5. Brief Interventions- Long-term Effects

A lot of times, quick and minimal efforts can produce a lasting and long-term positive effect. A substantial data of scientific findings reveals that the frequent brief and effective interventions in academic settings can have a constructive and sanguine impact on members of the university community (Bryant, et al., 2017 & Everly & Lating, 2022). PFA-U has been derived from the best available and research proven techniques that can promote better functioning and improved resilience in student and staff after and during any crisis situation.

In conclusion, PFA training in universities is a strategic investment in the mental health and well-being of the university community. It empowers faculty to provide immediate support, fosters resilience, ensures culturally sensitive interventions, and enhances institutional preparedness. Moreover, when it is amalgamated with Institutional programs such as Substance Use Control Program (SUCP), PFA-U not only addresses immediate distress but also facilitates long-term recovery by linking individuals to sustained support systems.



DISCLAIMER

“This manual is not equivalent to, nor a replacement for, professional psychological counseling or therapy. It is designed to equip individuals with basic Psychological First Aid (PFA) skills for immediate support and initial response in a university environment.”

CHAPTER 2

PFA-U: The 3 Ws (When, Who, and Where)



When should PFA-U be used?

PFA-U is implemented right away after first contact with highly distressed people. In most cases, immediately after the event, in other cases, a few days or weeks later. In a university setting, anywhere on the university premises such as classrooms, corridors, sports grounds, hostels, etc. where you find any person in distress or you have been notified as a first responder of the Crisis Response Team (CRT) to reach quickly the area quickly where PFA-U is required.

Do remember that not everyone who experiences an emotional or mental breakdown, will need or want PFA. Some people prefer to be left alone until they are back to their stable state of functioning. In such scenarios, make sure that you are available and easily accessible to that person in case they need you but do not force them to take help.

Who can provide PFA-U?

Anyone in the university community who is available on campus at the time of crisis and is trained for providing PFA can be the first responder in a critical situation. It is better to have a diverse team which comprises of members from different categories in the university like students, faculty, staff, security personnels, medical team, hostel wardens etc. Every academic block must have 2-4 (depending on the overall strength of that block) individuals who are trained in PFA-U.

Where to Provide PFA-U?

PFA can be provided at any place on campus that is secure in terms of physical safety and privacy for the affected people. Psychological emergencies are different from the medical ones and in universities, where majority of the population are young adults, there are more chances of having emotional and psychological distress situations as compared to the physical ones. Because of the elevated levels of emotional distress, it is very important and essential to ensure the privacy of the affected individual due to confidentiality reasons and to respect their dignity. That person might not be in a position to be fully aware of his/her privacy and will be in a vulnerable state.

Myths and Facts

Here are some interesting myths and facts surrounding PFA-U;

Myths	Facts
Only professionals can provide PFA-U	Anyone who has training in providing psycho-social support can provide PFA or PFA-U
It is a psychological debriefing	PFA-U is an emergency response to reduce distress and promote coping in a crisis situation in universities, whereas debriefing is a structured discussion of the event and its impact by a mental health professional, usually within a few days or weeks
Everyone who has been affected will need PFA-U	Not everyone who experiences a crisis event will need or want PFA-U
Different cultures have different ways for PFA-U administration	The core strategies remain the same, cultural leaders are engaged for provision of PFA-U services to fit the needs

The First Responder (PFA-U Provider)

First responders are individuals who are first to arrive at the scene of crisis to provide help. In university settings, these are personnels from the staff and student volunteers. They are trained to provide the essential emergency services to the university community. Other terms that are commonly used for first responders are CRT and Emergency Response Providers (ESP). The core emergency response group in a university to provide psychological first aid comprises of personnel from medical center, administration, security and counseling services. The general CRT members include a few members (at least 2-5) from every academic department and students from the university. People from this group are the first responders because they are more in numbers and normally have a quicker access to the site of emergency occurring on the university premises. Their presence during a crisis situation is critical as they play an important role in recovery of the affected individual. A certain level of planning and training is required to be completed by the first responders in order to provide a reasonable aid to the person in distress.

Planning

The planning phase is related to the staffing, training and getting volunteers to make a formal CRT as the first responders, prepared for the emergency situation on campus.

Training

Training and education of PFA-U providers is an essential part of planning for emergencies in the university premises. These responders are trained formally with different professional certifications, communication processes and related set of responsibilities that are aligned with the emergency protocols. The first responders need to have thorough training in demonstrating clear thinking and calmness because the impacted person is relying on them for support. Other people present around who are mostly students may follow the lead to remain calm, focused and ready to help. PFA-U providers also deliver a sense of hope to those in distress, who might be unable to feel it yet on their own, as they are still trying to make a sense of the situation and are looking for ways to stabilize it.

However, there's are certain limitations to making a team of first responders in the universities, the number of first responders is limited because most of the members of CRT have to carry out responsibilities as per their job roles and scope of practise in the university. The students volunteering as PFA-U providers, also have to fulfill their academic commitments. Another constraint is the limited/crowded spaces, as first responder, it could be challenging for you to encourage the affected person to express their concerns and overwhelming emotions while trying your best to contain the affect of that emotion, protect his/her privacy and keep the atmosphere safe and calm for everyone.

Preparation Phase

While preparing for university related emergencies, a very important thing is to learn about the university community and the history of the university with regards to number, types; intensity and measures taken before and after the crisis situations occurred within the boundary wall of the university. The intervention required in the preparation for emergency response are strength-based, goal-oriented and time-bound. Consider the following questions;

- 1.** Were there any previous adverse events at the university? (e.g., accident, violence, intentional property damage/destruction, threats, student/staff deaths, fire breakout, gender-based violence or racism, shootings, suicide/self-harm attempts, was it a confined or open area and was it secluded or crowded).
- 2.** What measures were taken immediately after the incident? (First aid administration, rescue efforts, rapid evacuation, securing the area etc).
- 3.** How recently and/or frequently have these adverse events occurred on campus? Also take into consideration the time, magnitude, duration, number of affected individuals).
- 4.** Has the university had an existing pre-post emergency intervention plan? If yes, were those interventions helpful or not?
- 5.** Is there any existing body or group functioning within the university that exclusively works for and promotes these protective services for the university community? If yes, learn about the details of the activities and list of services.

6. Are there any upcoming events at the university that might require PFA-U interventions (e.g. exams, standardized testing, sports events, accreditation review etc)?

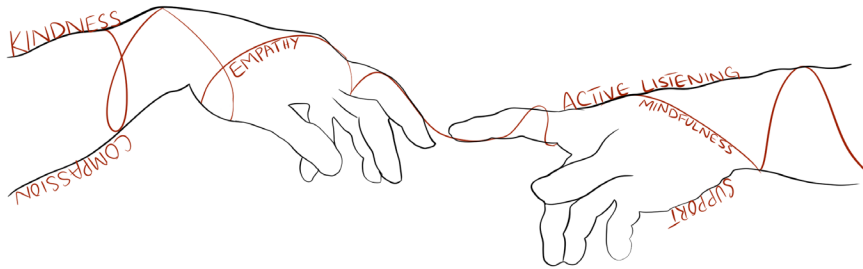
7. Are there any recent changes to university staff or faculty that might be distressful for the employees or students (e.g., a new Vice Chancellor/Rector, immediate rustications/transfers, etc.)?

8. How many collaborative agencies or stakeholders exist to support the university PFA-U services?

9. Are there any students/staff members who have any recent personal trauma that needs to be taken into consideration while forming a CRT?

The PFA-U provider should also be prepared to pay attention to his and her physical and emotional reactions during and after the crisis and practise self-care.

Essential skills and qualities of first responders who offer PFA-U



The first responders need to be trained to have a certain set of skills that is required to provide effective care to those in crisis. These skills are professional and unique for academic institutions, particularly universities. These will also help to hone their existing skills like communication, management and distress tolerance. PFA training helps the first responders to use these skills effectively in diverse yet similar scenarios. For example, they learn how to pay full attention and do active listening yet do the mental math of what resources are required to restore the situation and what will benefit the affected individual to the maximum.

- Primary focus on physical and material care and protection of people from danger.
- Immediate intervention: be direct, active and remain calm
- Focus on the “here” and “now” situation
- Provide accurate information about the situation
- Do not give false assurances
- Recognize the importance of taking action
- Reunite with family members
- Provide and ensure emotional support
- Focus on strengths and resilience
- Encourage self-reliance
- Respect feelings of others

Source: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Effective communication skills consist of several elements, including:

- 1. Empathy:** This means that trying to put yourself in the affected person’s shoes (how you would feel if you were facing a similar situation).
- 2. Respect and Dignity:** Treating the other person with respect and in a dignified manner. Believing that the other person holds the equal level of

human rights as you and should be provided services without any discrimination regarding his/her gender, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, colour, sex, disability, nationality, political views, property, social status and/or origin. The support provider must place the person at the center of the attention.

- 3. Genuineness:** Be real and honest to yourself and the person you serve.
- 4. Using the right level of language:** Be aware of the language barriers and avoid using any terminologies that would be difficult for the person in need to understand. If not, seek help from an interpreter to assure effective communication. Be considerate about the challenging situation of the person that might affect his/her communication abilities.
- 5. Polite:** Present yourself in a professional and polite manner.
- 6. Eye contact:** Maintaining a stable eye contact is crucial in giving a sense of assurance to the other person, still not every culture appreciates it. If the other person is not maintaining eye contact or avoiding it, focus on other aspects of communication and provide help without getting uncomfortable.
- 7. Listening skills:** While in distress, some people are unable to speak properly. They might only utter a few words, maybe just stare or start crying while making an effort to tell you what's happening. Try to pick up the keywords and make a picture of what is being told with the tone of voice, and choice of words. Do not interrupt the speaker, laugh or panic. Ask questions only when there's a pause.
- 8. Non-judgmental:** People might treat you differently from the way you expect them to treat you. Be aware of the cultural and social boundaries.
- 9. Empowering:** Always use words that are affirming and calming for the other person. Your choice of words should reflect support and encouragement so that they regain their mental strength and will to recover.
- 10. Use non-violent and threatening voice:** Your tone of voice must be calm and non-threatening. Do not use terms that are commanding in any way.
- 11. Respect for confidentiality:** Make sure to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the affected person. Any information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis. Before sharing the information with others, obtain consent from the person or their primary caregivers/guardians.

12. Interpersonal communication skills: Communication is the exchange of messages between two or more people (a communicator and a receiver at minimum), in a verbal and non-verbal way. Non-verbal communication is a very important interpersonal communication skill but is mostly overlooked. It is a vital tool to make the other person who is part of the communication to feel non-threatened, calm and welcomed. While communicating with others, non-verbal communication patterns or behavior that should be avoided may include:

- 13. Poor eye contact:** Blinking often, very direct/intimidating eye contact, avoiding eye contact etc. This reflect that the listener is pre-occupied with something else, making the other person feel unimportant.
- 14. Frequent hand gestures:** Flapping, fidgeting, waving, tapping, etc. This may feel as the facilitator is in a rush and wants to get over with this quickly without focusing on resolving the issue.
- 15. Uninterested facial expressions:** Chewing a bubble gum, frowning, yawning, appearing sad, scared or frustrated. This will give an impression of being uninterested and apathetic on the responders part.
- 16. Body movement:** Pacing back and forth while talking/listening, tapping of the foot or hand, constant leg movement, rigid body posture, keep seated while the other person is standing, etc. This looks rude and unprofessional.
- 17. Posture:** Very relaxed, very stiff, over friendly or rude. The helper should keep the posture easy and humble. This gives an impression of readiness to help and also helps the other person feel safe.
- 18. Head nods:** No head nods. This may confuse or disappoint the other person as they may feel that you are not willing to help.
- 19. Leaning forward:** Getting too close to other person will violate their personal space and will make them feel unsafe.
- 20. Shaky hands or covering the face with the hand:** Will give a feeling that you are scared and are not the right person others can look up to for help.
- 21. Be mindful of cultural differences while communicating:** Every culture has different meaning with regards to these non-verbal communication ways.

Attitudes and behavior

The following attitudes and body language helps to increase trust and confidence:

1. Maintaining a friendly and empathetic eye contact while looking at speaker face.
2. Open and welcoming body posture such as sitting or standing in a welcoming position, putting on a smile, greeting others in a culturally acceptable way will give a feeling of warmth and safety.
3. Keeping an appropriate distance from the speaker.
4. Keeping a relaxed and calm demeanour will help in rapid rapport building.

Active Listening

Active listening is vital in understanding the needs of the other person, and providing reassurance that they are safe. Here are a few tips for practising helpful active listening;

1. **Always Listen First:** Give the other person sufficient time to compose themselves and can tell whatever he/she wants without any rush.
2. **Identify Their Needs:** Try to understand the situation and figure out what the beneficiary needs.
3. **Questioning:** It is a complex skill that can aid or inhibit the helping process. When used properly, both the helper and beneficiary gain better understanding of issues and the solutions to those issues. If it is used poorly, beneficiary feels interrogated by the helper and may avoid to provide details of the issues. Questioning helps to direct the attention in a solution focused and strength exploratory way. When done properly, it narrow downs the conversation and clear out inconsistencies and inaccuracies.
4. **Be clear, be specific, be aware:** Avoid getting into too much of details and make your conversation brief, simple and clear.
5. **Observe Keenly:** Make sure that the beneficiary is able to understand what you are saying by observing their reaction.

6. Eliminate Communication Barriers: Actively try to have safe and warm interactions with the people. Be aware of the social, cultural, economic and physical boundaries that can impact your interactions with them. Avoid disruptions or distractions in communication.

7. Avoid Judgements: Be aware of your own biases and values. Do not label or judge others.

8. Empathize Genuinely: Make sure that your words, gestures and body posture reflect empathy and genuineness.

9. Be Patient: Do not over talk and interrupt the other person. Do not say anything that you are not sure of. Think before answering.

10. Respond Respectfully: Respond in a way that is respectful, encouraging, supportive and constructive.

11. Reflecting: These skills are an important part of active listening. Rephrase and reflect in way that encourages the person to continue talking, and also lets the beneficiary gain confidence that his/her problem is being addressed in the right way. Ornament your conversation with small prompts, one to two words encouragers like, "I see," "that's good," "nice work," verbal utterances such as "Um-hm," head nods, hand gestures.

Good Communication: Things to Say and Do:

- Try to find a quiet place to talk and minimize outside distractions.
- Be patient and calm.
- Provide factual information IF you have it. Be honest about what you know and what you don't know. "I don't know but I will try to find out about that for you."
- Let them know you hear them, for example, nod your head and say... "hmmmm."
- Give information in a way the person can understand – keep it simple.
- Acknowledge how they are feeling, and any losses or important events they share with you, such as loss of home or death of a loved one. "I'm so sorry..."
- Respect privacy. Keep the person's story confidential, especially when they disclose very private events.
- Acknowledge the person's strengths and how they have helped themselves.

Source: Psychological First Aid: Facilitator's manual for orienting field workers

CHAPTER 4

PFA-U Action Principles



Psychological First Aid has three basic action principles, which if followed properly can bring a crisis situation under control in a very short amount of time. These core principles are:

Look	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observe for safety• Observe for people with obvious urgent basic needs• Observe for people with serious distress reactions
Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make contact with people who may need support• Ask about people's needs and concerns• Listen to people and help them feel calm
Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Help people address basic needs and access services• Help people cope with problems• Give information• Connect people with loved ones and social support

Source: *Guideline on Psychological First Aid (PFA), Guidebook for Humanitarian Workers - PDMA/UNICEF*

4.1 Look

Goal: To calm and orient emotionally overwhelmed or disoriented students and staff

This principle comes into action upon your first contact with a student or staff member. It is an important opportunity to promote a sense of calm, ease, and support to those feeling overwhelmed and impacted by the event. You may be delivering services in a large setting, such as a university gymnasium, classroom, or sports ground or more than one person. Keep the following in mind when making initial contact with someone in distress.

- **Initiate Contact in a Non-intrusive, Compassionate and Helpful Manner:** Approach the person in a concerned but calm manner. Provide assurance that he/she is safe and you are there to help.
- **Remember:** that some students, staff, or faculty members may not want your assistance, but may still benefit from the support. If there are more than one or two persons, for example if a group of friends/batchmates are feeling overwhelmingly distressed because of an issue with some other students or office in the university, actively engage individuals by walking around the setting and introducing yourself. Ask for backup from other members of CRT. Remain calm and reassure the individuals that the matter is resolvable. Let them share their concerns and do not interrupt conversations.
- **Ensure Physical Safety and Comfort:** Make sure that everyone is physically safe and comfortable. There may be real or perceived threat to safety. Observe the environment and immediately report if you see any safety concerns.
- **Ask:** the supporting staff, students or use your phone to call security officials who can resolve those safety concerns that are beyond your control like weapons etc.
- **Remove:** any other stuff that can be harmful for others like broken furniture, shreds of glass, broken wires, spilled liquid or any other items that are dangerous. Ask the students/friends, roommate, or faculty if there are any special medical concerns that might need special intervention or medical devices, any medication that the person may need. If yes, contact the medical center.

- **Attend to Basic Needs:** By passing out water, food, etc., you will help them to stabilize and feel safe. It is also a way to get them engaged while the situation gets under control.
- **Dispatch Information Timely:** Ensure that you deliver the accurate information in a timely manner to the affected person. Also make sure that they are able to hear, read, and understand information. Use your judgement as to how and when to share the information. Once the person is stable enough to comprehend, inform the person of his/her rights to privacy and confidentiality, in a clear manner, regardless of their language fluency or their cognitive, speech, or auditory abilities. If working with a person with special needs. Have somebody who can aide with the constraint.
- **Make sure university authorities have granted permission to share event-specific information,** such as who and how many are directly affected by the event, academic/career credentials, contact information of the individual and his/her family, when the department/university services will resume etc. Remember that the families of students and staff, may be getting information from outside sources of technology like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TV, phone, etc., and might be at a risk of becoming distressed. Upon contact, ask about what information they have about the incident and address any misinformation or distressing information.
- **Follow these steps while delivering information:**
 - » Position yourself at an eye level with the affected person.
 - » Use simple and clear language and avoid any jargon and professional terms.
 - » Keep your volume low but in an audible range, use a calm and reassuring tone.
 - » Give the other person enough time and space to respond.
 - » Provide information that is accurate and easy to understand.
 - » If the person needs to be under supervision, tell them who is the supervisor and what other steps are being taken care of to resolve the situation.
 - » Provide the person with visual cues or illustrative material for reference.

Ask yourself the following when talking to students:

Is the information age appropriate?

Is he/she able to comprehend what you are saying?

Does he/she have enough privacy to receive the information?

If yes, you are good to go!

- **Other safety concerns that need to be looked after, involve:**

- » **Threat of harm to self or others:** Look for signs that students, staff or faculty may display that can harm themselves or others, for e.g., expressing intense anger or agitation, fresh cut/burn marks on visible parts of the body. If the individual is a high-risk case, and requires any additional support, contact the medical and mental health personnel or security to handle the situation. If the person is hysterical, isolate him/her from others in a safe and supervised place. Attend to anyone else who wants assistance.

- » **State of Shock:** If the individual is showing these signs or any additional symptoms; weakness or rapid pulse, irregular breathing or weakness, clammy or pale skin, dull or glassy eyes; is unable to speak or unresponsive, lost bladder or bowel control; or shows disoriented state, confusion, restlessness or agitation, immediately seek medical help.

- » **Witnesses of the event may also get affected:** Although not everyone gets impacted the same way in a crisis situation, but be on the lookout for those who might appear to be at risk of getting affected more than their peers. If any other person starts showing signs of distress, seek help from the mental health counselors in your university.

- » **Ensure Availability:** During or after a critical situation, make sure that sufficient number of PFA-U trained individuals are available on campus for initial contact. Not all of them might need further assistance but don't make any assumptions before hand.

- » **Expect Resistance/avoidance:** There's a strong possibility that people from the university experiencing trauma or emotional or mental breakdown, especially students, may not respond to you immediately

or positively. They might avoid you or resist any kind of support by you initially. It may take time for them to trust you and develop a degree of confidence and safety with you. If the affected individual is from any department where you also work, then it'll be better to get them connected with any other member of the CRT. If the person declines your offer of help, respect his/her decision and inform him/her about your whereabouts or when and where a PFA-U provider can be available.

- **Addressing Media and Social Networking Safety Concerns**

- » It is important to protect individuals from unnecessary exposure to reminders and details of the traumatic events. It can put them under further stress and fear. Explain it to them how, excessive viewing of the media and social media coverage can upset them and may subtly traumatise/re-traumatize them and their loved ones. Discourage the other members of university community like staff and faculty from discussing the details or view it on their phones/laptops anywhere on the campus. Keep reminding them through emails and text messages about where they can get the reliable and latest information to avoid and misperceptions about the event.

- » Be aware of your limitations regarding the spread of information through social media and internet. It is important to monitor what is being shared on such sites. For example, if students set-up a "memorial page," or social media campaign regarding any member of the university community who has died or injured, regularly monitor this page to see what and how much information is being posted. Notify the administrator and get it addressed through your social media and marketing team. Ask them to proactively post the accurate information and also include other credible resources like field experts from where the affectee can seek help. Regularly update the official website and social media sites.

- » Ask the students what information they have from there forums and what is their opinion about it. Encourage them to ask questions and the suggestion they have to help resolve the situation. Review the university policy regarding giving interviews, sharing documents or photos with the media during an emergency. If the policy does allow for interviews, remind the interviewee that they need to be mindful about the privacy of the other people who part of the incident or may get affected by it. Students may become fixated on the information through the media. It is a very natural

and common response. It is also a protective factor as they try to seek information about the incident, try to understand it, put into context and avoid getting damaged by it any further. However, it can also evoke distress and fear in them.

- **Provider Alert for Parents**

- » Tell the parents/caregivers that; They should discuss any concerns that their children have and advise them to limit their screen time. Keep an open communication with them and be in-touch with the university administration for credible details and updates. If their children are hostelites on campus or else where, ask them to keep in-touch with the university authorities and avoid any outside source of information as they might assume that the events are happening over and over and their child's safety is at risk. This will allow the parents/caregivers to see you as a protective and supportive person who they trust with their child's well-being.

4.2 Listen

Goal: To offer practical help to students and staff to address their immediate needs and concerns and tailor PFA-U interventions to fulfill those needs.

In most of the crisis situations, you will face time constraints to gather information, and will need to adjust your priorities according to the individual's needs and concerns. Be flexible in adopting the PFA-U guidelines. A brief assessment of the needs and information gathering can help you tailor the intervention plan quickly.

- Follow these tips:

- » **Avoid in-depth questions:** During emergencies and emotional melt down experiences, in-depth questioning may provoke additional distress.

- » **Do not Press for Details:** Avoid asking questions related to the details of trauma or loss. Try following their lead while discussing what happened. If a person is unwilling to move to a secure place or is too anxious to talk about his/her experience, politely tell him/her that some basic information will help you get a better understanding of the immediate needs. Also offer to call the mental health counselor for a later detailed discussion about his/her experience.

- » **Give Privacy Reminder:** It is very common for a distressed person not to be fully aware of his/her privacy during an emergency. Tell the person softly that the present situation may not be suitable to discuss any personal experience. » Provide information that is accurate and easy to understand.

Questions for Information Gathering and PFA-U Interventions:

Areas	Questions	PFA
Immediate needs and Nature of Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Are you okay to talk about this?” • “Do you want me to get you something to eat?” • “Did you get hurt?” • “Did you see anyone get hurt?” • “Did it scare you in anyway?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide post-crisis information and ways of coping • Seek medical assistance in case of injuries • Offer counseling support • Offer a follow-up meeting
Death of a Loved One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Did someone close to you get hurt or die as a result of the event? Who got hurt or died 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide brief counseling, emotional support, and practical assistance • Connect with friends and family • Offer a follow-up meeting
Ongoing Threat or Safety Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Tell me what you understand.” • “Do you have concerns about your safety or the safety of your family or friends?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about steps taken to ensure safety and protection • Provide information about the incident and the available services • Report safety concerns to the appropriate authority
Separation from the Family/Care-givers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Is there anyone who can be with them during this time?” • “Do you know where they are?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer practical assistance to connect people to their family.

Areas	Questions	PFA
Mental Health Issue and Physical Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you have any medical or mental health condition that needs attention?” • “Do you need any medications that you don’t have?” • “Can you get in touch with your doctor or parents?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide practical assistance to obtain medical and/ or psychological care and medication
Loss or Property Damage (Home, University, Pets, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What did you lose that is important to you?” • “Was it badly damaged or destroyed?” • “Did your pet die or is missing?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide emotional comfort • Provide information about available resources • Provide information about social support and positive coping
Intense Feelings of Shame and/ or Guilt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you feel responsible for what happened?” • “Do you feel you could have done something could’ve done to avoid what happened?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide emotional comfort • Provide information about dealing with difficult emotions • Offer counseling support
Thoughts about Causing Harm to Self or Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sometimes dealing with such overwhelming situations is difficult. Have you had any thoughts about harming yourself?” • “Have you had any thoughts about harming someone else?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get immediate mental health or medical help • Stay with the individual until the support arrives

Areas	Questions	PFA
Social Support Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you want me to get anyone from your family or friends on board who can help you with this problem?” • “Who do you feel comfortable speaking to when you need help or want to talk?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the person connect with the person who can provide emotional comfort • Provide information about coping and social support • Offer a follow-up meeting
Substance or Alcohol Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Have you been using Substance/ alcohol?” • “Have you ever used any sort of drugs or alcohol in the past while dealing with a problem?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about how these problems are handled in the university. • Get assistance from appropriate services on campus • Offer a follow-up meeting • Seek medical referral for those undergoing withdrawal
Past Experience to Trauma and Loss of Loved Ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Have you ever been in a similar situation before?” • “Would you like to share some other bad thing happened to you in the past?” • “Have you ever lost someone close to you to by death?” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide brief counseling, emotional support, and practical assistance • Offer a follow-up meeting • Take note of those students who report prior trauma/loss, as they may have future academic or behavioral problems

Areas	Questions	PFA
Specific Youth and Adult Concerns (Relationship Issues, Family Conflict, Chronic Illness of a Loved One, Parental Divorce etc).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sometimes things become difficult to handle on your own, have you ever tried talking to a professional about this issue?” • “Have you ever handled any such situation before?” • Provide information on coping • Get them connected with professional assistance • Offer counseling services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information on coping • Get them connected with professional assistance • Offer counseling services

- **Offer Practical Assistance to Students and Staff:**

Once the students and staff, have identified their needs and concerns, it becomes easier to benefit them with an intervention plan. PFA-U guidelines help to facilitate them to gradually understand the situation, think about alternatives, choose the best option and follow through the resolving steps. The best thing about the university is the presence of young adults who are motivated and energetic, and can help in problem solving with some guidance and basic training.

Follow these four steps when offering practical assistance:

Step 1: Identify the Most Immediate Needs

If the affected individual has identified several concerns or needs, is unable to identify anything or has not much clarity about what he/she needs the most or is concerned about the most at that time, bring his/her attention to one at a time. You can also start identifying the important needs and concerns for them and go ahead to address the ones that he/she asks you for. Some needs will be addressed immediately like food, water, phoning a family member or friend etc, while others may require sometime for example, locating a loved one, waiting for an appropriate time to call family or friend, evacuation, securing the premises, reaching a hospital, waiting for the medical or mental health professional to arrive etc. Stay with individual and give distract him/her with calming and coping techniques like deep breathing, ask about his/her hobbies, favourite food, colour, sport etc.

Look at the following example:

PFA Responder: I understand from what you're telling me, Ayesha, that what you want right now is to talk to your mom who wasn't well when you came back to hostel. Let's wait for the morning and in the meanwhile how about sending a beautiful get-well soon message to your mom or making a digital card wishing her a speedy recovery?

Step 2: Clarify the Need

Next step is to specify the primary concern or need. This will help establish your next step in resolving the problem.

You might say:

PFA Responder: It sounds like you are worried about a few different things at the moment regarding your student portal getting blocked. Let's make a list of the things that we can do about it from urgent to less urgent. (1) Visit the Registrar Office to check the reason behind it, (2) Write an email to your department head to explaining the reason behind your extended absence. (3) Call your doctor or family to send your medical reports. (4) Request your teaching faculty to help you catch-up the missed lectures in their free time.

Step 3: Discuss an Action Plan

Discuss the available options to address the problem and ask for the individual's ideas or suggestions about resolving the problem. If you already know what services the individual may require, assist in obtaining those like mental health care, food, transport, locating or reporting a missing object etc. Give them the accurate information about the policies and procedures involved. The more you will stick to the facts and practical solutions, the more reliable source you will become for your department and university.

PFA Responder: I understand that staff's non-availability can be annoying sometimes. Let's talk about what you can do in the meanwhile, how about taking a walk around the block until the staff comes back after lunch?

Step 4: Act to Address the Need

Help the individual to gain back the strength needed to resolve the problem. For example, help him/her make a plan to get out of the problem or assist with the paperwork required to resolve it. Within the university setting, where students are adults and have a significant level of autonomy, they may feel like not involving the family/caregivers at any point while dealing with the problem. For example, a student who is at risk of losing needs-based scholarship due to his/her struggles with mental health issues, might request you not to inform his/her family about this. Discuss the possibilities regarding how his/her scholarship can be saved and what options are available on campus to help him/her with mental health concerns. Also motivate the student to look for options to increase financial stability to avoid added stressors.

4.3 Link

Goal: To help connecting with brief or extended support including family, friends, faculty and/or outside resources

For most of the individuals, immediately connecting with their close primary relationships (parents, friends, spouses, intimate partner, a teacher), will be a priority. The practical ways to do so can be;

- **Establishing Contact:** Assist them to reach these people by any source like in-person, by e-mail, by phone, social media sites, etc. For many students and staff, the university itself serves as a primary support. Reinforce the strengthening of connectedness among university community members. By this, they will develop a sense of belonging with the university community and can be each other's support in times of crisis. Some of them may get worried about an emergency situation in their family's neighbourhood or within the family. Provide support by finding out what is actually happening and clarify any misconception about the safety of their loved ones.

- **Navigating Parental/Family Concerns:** At times, parents or family members become over concerned about the safety of their child or spouse/family member, after an emergency which may be difficult to handle. For example, parents might start calling a lot more times than usual which might be annoying or embarrassing for a student, a staff member may want to quit the job or feels stressed out because of a similar concern by his/her family. You may have to make them understand that how their family/parents also got affected by the incident and this is a temporary phase. Other times, individuals may get affected by the event in a deeper way. The injuries they got, intense emotional states that they experienced and their peer relations may become a reminder of what happened. If they were friends with someone who was responsible for the incident or the whistleblower was friend who reported them to the authorities, they might face bullying or alienation which will ultimately result in losing social connection on campus. As these changes occur, facilitate those individuals by improving communication with their friends. Help them seek mental health support on campus. Peer-to-peer programs can help to regain the sense of belonging among students.

- **External Referrals for Additional Services:** Identify which and how many affected individuals require additional services that aren't offered or are limited on campus. Make the referrals to outside sources according to the university policy. Also make sure you that you follow the confidentiality

protocols and policies regarding parental notifications. If a group referral is required, you can also arrange a temporary on-campus set-up to accommodate the affected individuals. Examples of situations requiring a referral include:

- » An acute medical problem that requires hospitalization.
- » Prolonged state of disorientation or other mental health issues that require a psychiatric intervention.
- » Worsening of any preexisting emotional, medical or behavioral problem.
- » Threat of harm to self or others.
- » Substance/alcohol use and related concerns.
- » Cases of abuse involving a child or elder (be aware of reporting laws).
- » Ongoing difficulties with coping after the incident (four weeks or more).
- » When they ask for a referral.

In addition, develop strategies to cater to the repeatedly occurring emergency situations in the university community that may help the students and staff to build resilience. These crisis situations may include; panic attacks, social anxiety, depression, sleep problems, intoxication, violence episode etc. Promote mental health services, and social support programs and also encourage families and staff to reconnect to such agencies that offer these services.

Tips for Referral

Provide a brief reason of why a referral is required.

Check the accuracy of your understanding of the affected individual's needs and concerns.

Ideally, give them more than one referral so they can opt for the best suitable one.

Describe how these options may help and what is the procedure of referral etc.

Ask about the person's view to the suggested referral and ask for permission to share their contact and other related information with the external source.

Take informed consent from parents/care givers for the release of information with the professional receiving the referral.

Make sure to maintain a record of referrals provided by the university.

Always provide a written referral information or, if possible, make an appointment then and there.

Video Resources

Introduction: <https://fb.watch/u81ZVHKdGN/>

Action Principles: <https://youtu.be/c0YzDVI9yg>

Model Practice Session: <https://youtu.be/QHAOCeTCHPg>

Model Practice Session: <https://youtu.be/8rJG-QrWibs>

• Post-Crisis Measures

Once the crisis is over, the PFA-U responders need to take post-crisis measures.

» **Documentation and Record Maintenance:** It is important to document and keep record each and every incident that have caused any kind of emergency in the university. It helps in data collection by the end of each academic term to get an overview about the nature, intensity, frequency and interventions implemented/required to effectively manage the emergency situation.

» **Debriefing Meet-up:** A debriefing meet-up among the members of the CRT is necessary to review how the situation was taken care of. It also helps in recognising any short comings in terms of resources and or skills. The meetings can be scheduled according to the nature of the crisis. For instance, if the event was of such nature that it involved multiple parties both victims and/or responders, debriefing should be done immediately after the crisis is over. If the incident was of such nature that the affected person does not require on-going support and/or external referral, the meeting can be held on regular intervals or as per defined by your university's policy.

» **Promote Helping Culture:** Another secondary but important post-crisis measure is promoting a positive and helping culture within the university community. Keeping in contact with the affected individual may not be possible due to many reasons, so it is important to create a healthy, non-intrusive environment that facilitates everyone and gets them connected to each other. These measures help in breaking stereotypes surrounding mental health issues, lowers the feelings of loneliness and improves the sense of belonging among members of the university community.

Crisis Response Team (CRT)



Crisis Response Team Operational Framework

In response to the myriad stressors impacting university students, the establishment of a specialized Crisis Response Team (CRT) is crucial. This team will serve a critical role in delivering timely and effective Psychological First Aid for Universities (PFA-U) to students experiencing crises, irrespective of the underlying causes or circumstances. By instituting a structured and coordinated approach to crisis intervention, the CRT aims to address mental health challenges promptly, thereby mitigating distress, minimizing the risk of self-harm, and promoting the overall well-being of the student population. At BNU, the CRT operates as the frontline response mechanism within a broader institutional framework, working in close coordination with Substance Use Control Program (SUCP), which provide structured pathways for continued assessments, counseling and long-term support following initial crisis intervention.

Composition and Training of the Crisis Response Team at BNU

The Crisis Response Team (CRT) at Beaconhouse National University (BNU) comprises individuals trained in Psychological First Aid, including academic coordinators, hostel wardens, students and faculty. Each CRT member underwent regular, rigorous training sessions, ensuring their proficiency in trauma-informed care and stress response. These members of BNU community are now adept at identifying and addressing signs of psychological distress, employing active listening techniques, and providing empathetic, unbiased support to individuals in crisis. CRT members receive training under the supervision of a licensed clinical psychologist, ensuring that they are proficient in crisis management and de-escalation techniques. This training encompasses not only the stabilization and support of individuals experiencing acute distress but also self-care protocols essential for first responders. CRT members are also equipped to connect individuals with appropriate resources and mental health services, and they will possess the cultural competence necessary to deliver support that is respectful of diverse backgrounds and experiences. This comprehensive training ensures that CRT members provide compassionate, informed, and practical assistance, thereby facilitating recovery and fostering resilience during crises.

Coordination and Response Protocol

To enhance the effectiveness of the CRT, a dedicated communication channel, such as a WhatsApp group, is established. This platform allows CRT members to swiftly coordinate their responses in urgent situations where a student requires immediate assistance. Upon receiving an alert, the CRT member nearest to the student's location on campus promptly provide PFA-U, adhering to the established "Look, Listen, Link" framework.

The following steps must be taken by the first responders to get prepared for a crisis response to minimise the level of stress;

Coordination and Response Protocol

Make an emergency plan

Be well-informed about the different sort of emergencies that can happen on campus and the protective actions to be taken.

Be well-informed regarding the university policies and protocols regarding emergencies.

Establish a swift and effective way of communication between the CRT members.

Prepare for challenges related to individual with special and medical needs.

Determine ways to communicate effectively with the family of the affected person.

PFA-U Tool Kit

Having a well-stocked toolbox is a great way to be better equipped for whatever challenges you may face. You will encounter different situations and different emotional and psychological reactions while dealing with an emergency. The tools for coping with a psychological emergency will be different from those needed for a medical emergency. You might need to add or change the items in your tool kit as per your requirements.

The must have items in a PFA-U tool kit are as follows;

Prepare an emergency supply kit

Water bottle.

A few energy bars (keep replacing the expired ones with the new on regular intervals).

A pack of tissue papers.

An eco-friendly breathing bag.

Basic stationary.

Basic Band-Aid.

Relaxation breathing tips card.

Stress management strategy card.

Progressive muscle relaxation steps card

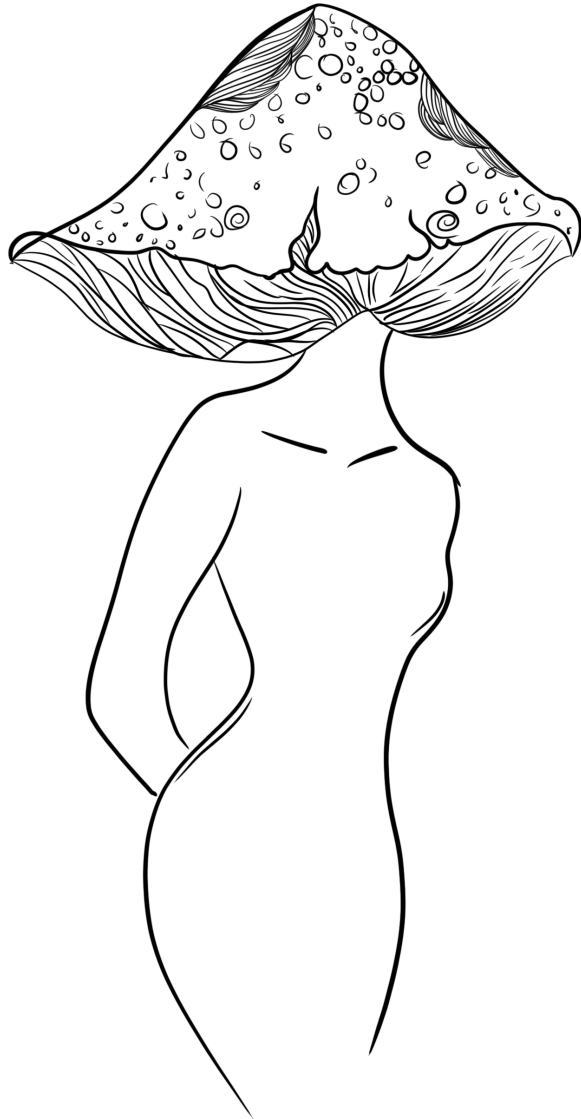
Earmark Safe Spaces

The Deans' Offices, Counseling Center, any other area on campus where the distressed individual's privacy is protected, shall be designated as safe spaces where students in distress can be escorted. At least one of these spaces must be made available at all times, subject to the direction of the Vice Chancellor. In all cases, the student's consent will be obtained before transporting them to either location, ensuring that they are taken to the environment in which they feel most comfortable.

Volunteer Inclusion and Expansion of CRT

The expansion of the CRT through the inclusion of volunteers is strongly encouraged. Volunteers who undergo the requisite training will bolster the team's capacity to respond to crises both on campus and in the surrounding community. The CRT will facilitate regular training sessions, with the understanding that a larger, well-prepared team is better equipped to provide necessary assistance whenever and wherever it may be needed.

Ethical Guidelines



Several critical factors must be meticulously followed and consistently upheld when providing psychological first aid. These factors can be categorized into the following key themes.

1. Privacy and Confidentiality

- 1.1. Protect the individual's personal information and ensure their story remains confidential.
- 1.2. Only breach confidentiality under compelling and justified circumstances.

2. Emotional and Practical Support

- 2.1. Provide both emotional comfort and practical assistance to those in distress.
- 2.2. Do not probe too deeply into their personal issues to avoid overstepping boundaries.

3. Cultural Sensitivity, Respect and Consent

- 3.1. Act with sensitivity, considering the individual's cultural background, age, and gender. Do not make any decisions without asking for their consent.
- 3.2. Avoid showing disrespect or unintentionally exploiting your role as a helper.

4. Active Listening and Focus

- 4.1. Practice active listening, ensuring your complete focus on the conversation.
- 4.2. Do not allow distractions or wandering thoughts during critical discussions.

5. Biases and Judgment

- 5.1. Be aware of your own biases and make efforts to set them aside..
- 5.2. Avoid judging the individual's actions, feelings, or decisions.

6. Supporting Autonomy

- 6.1. Respect the individual's autonomy and further encourage the individual's right to make their own choices and support self-help.
- 6.2. Do not impose solutions or dictate how they should resolve their issues.

7. Honesty and Integrity

- 7.1. Always provide accurate information and avoid making false promises.
- 7.2. Avoid misleading, do not offer false assurances or provide incorrect details.

8. Assistance and Boundaries

- 8.1. Assist individuals in accessing necessary resources and basic needs.
- 8.2. Maintain boundaries and strictly refrain from asking for money or favors in exchange for assistance.

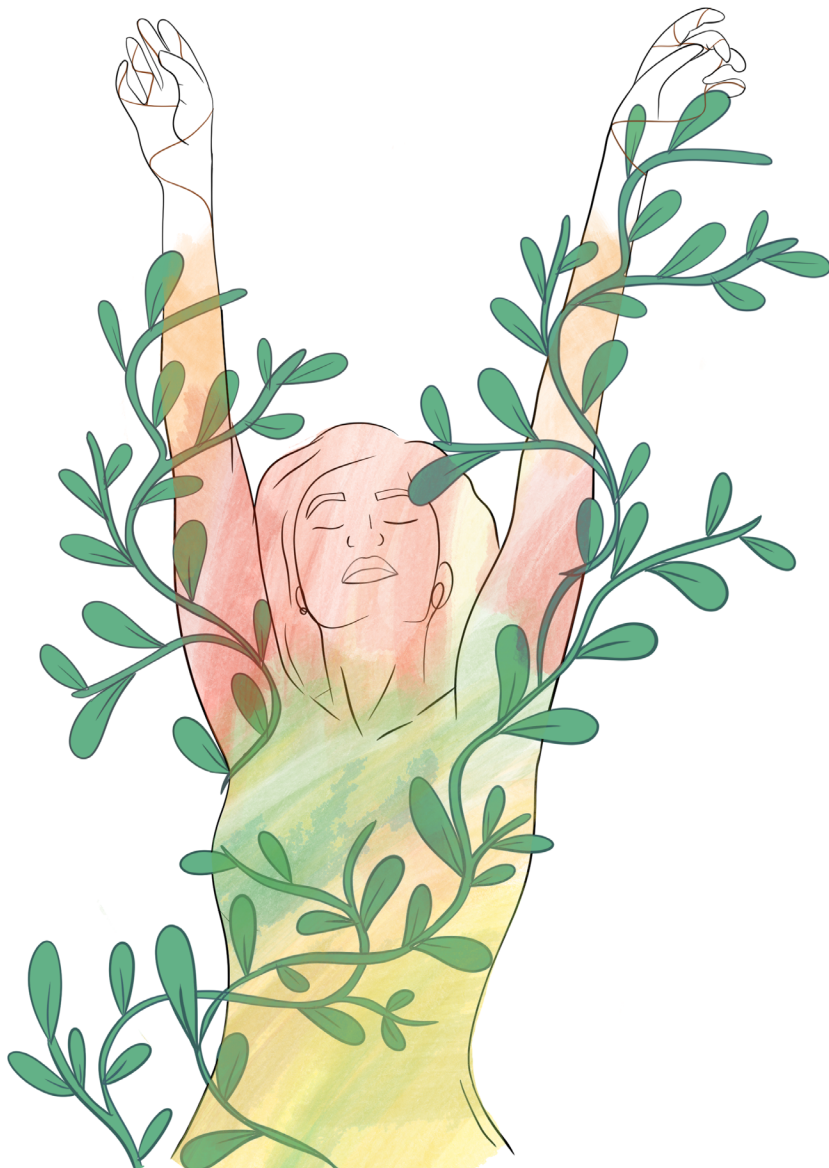
9. Recognizing Limitations

- 9.1. Recognize when a situation is beyond your capabilities and seek additional help if needed. Do not make false promises.
- 9.2. Do not overestimate your skills or abilities in handling complex cases.

10. Ending Support Respectfully

- 10.1. Make it clear that the individual can seek help in the future, even if they decline assistance now.
- 10.2. Conclude your support respectfully and professionally, providing information about further assistance if needed. Avoid abrupt endings without proper closure.

Case Scenarios



1. Case Scenario:

Psychological First Aid Response to a Panic Attack Leading to Loss of Consciousness on University Grounds.

(A student on university grounds loses consciousness during a panic attack. The first responder, upon witnessing this, immediately alerts the crisis response team via text message and proceeds to assess the situation).

Ensuring Immediate Safety and Physical Well-being (Look)

The first responder promptly evaluates the environment to ensure the student's safety. This involves dispersing the crowd that has gathered and relocating the student to a secure area to prevent further distress or potential hazards. Upon reaching the student, the responder checks for vital signs by assessing the student's pulse and respiration. As the student is unconscious, the responder gently taps the student's shoulder and addresses them verbally to gauge responsiveness. When the student does not regain consciousness, the responder refrains from administering any liquid (e.g., water), as this could pose a choking risk. Instead, the responder elevates the student's legs to facilitate blood flow to the brain, a common intervention for syncope (fainting), while gently rubbing the student's hand. These actions contribute to the student regaining consciousness shortly thereafter.

Administering Psychological First Aid (Listen/Assist)

Once the student regains consciousness, emergency services are deemed unnecessary at this stage. Before offering any further assistance, the responder ensures to seek the student's consent. The student is asked if they would like water and a sweet snack to stabilize their glucose levels, to which they agree. Subsequently, the responder requests the student's permission to guide them through controlled breathing exercises using a paper bag—a technique often employed to manage hyperventilation associated with panic attacks. The student consents and follows the responder's instructions. As the student's distress visibly decreases, the first responder introduces themselves and inquires if the student wishes to discuss the incident. The student consents and discloses that the panic attack was triggered by overwhelming exam stress and feelings of inadequacy despite extensive preparation. As the conversation continues, the student begins to exhibit signs of renewed panic, including rapid breathing, a louder voice, and an urgent plea for support.

Further Support and Referral (Link)

In response, the first responder calmly instructs the student to drink more water and to continue with the breathing exercises. The responder asks for the student's consent before proceeding to alleviate their immediate concern by assuring them that they will communicate with the academic coordinator to explore the possibility of rescheduling the exam. The student agrees to this approach. Recognizing the need for further psychological support, the responder asks the student if they would prefer to visit the counseling center to speak with a licensed clinical psychologist or continue the conversation in the dean's office. The student consents to being taken to the counseling center.

Given that the student has regained composure and is able to walk, but is still visibly shaken by the attention of nearby students, the responder asks if they can assist the student to the counseling center. With the student's agreement, they are escorted to the counseling center with the assistance of another crisis responder. Upon arrival, the psychologist is briefed on the situation, and arrangements are made to accommodate the student's needs appropriately, all with the student's consent.

Conclusion

This scenario underscores the importance of a prompt, calm, and supportive response in managing a panic attack that results in unconsciousness. The responder's actions not only address the immediate physical needs of the student but also provide crucial psychological support, ensuring that each step of care is administered with the student's explicit consent, thereby respecting their autonomy and dignity.

2. Case Scenario:

Psychological First Aid for a Self-Harm Incident in a University Hostel

A student residing in a university hostel has engaged in self-harm, resulting in superficial bleeding. Her roommate, upon discovering the incident, becomes extremely distressed and immediately rushes to inform the warden, fearing for her friend's well-being. The warden, who is also a trained first responder as part of the university's crisis response team, takes prompt action to address the situation.

Situation Assessment (Look)

Upon receiving the report, the warden reassures the informant by identifying herself as a first responder within the crisis response team. Recognizing the informant's heightened emotional state, she initiates immediate psychological first aid (PFA) by employing calming techniques, such as guided breathing exercises. The warden also inquires whether the informant requires any additional support on the way to the hostel room, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to crisis management. When the warden and the informant reach the hostel room, they observe that the student who self-harmed is seated in a corner, appearing emotionally withdrawn. The physical examination reveals that the bleeding is minimal, and the cuts do not necessitate immediate medical intervention. Given the non-critical nature of the injuries, the warden decides against summoning emergency medical services. Instead, she hands the first aid kit she brought along to the informant and approaches the affected student.

Engagement with the Affected Student (Look/ensuring safety)

The warden introduces herself to the affected student, who exhibits signs of severe distress, such as minimal verbal communication, lack of eye contact, and excessive fidgeting. Maintaining a calm and supportive demeanor, the warden requests the student's consent to inspect her wounds and hold her hand during the assessment. Upon receiving the student's consent, she carefully examines the injuries and applies bandages to the affected areas from water and to continue with the breathing exercises. The responder asks for the student's consent before proceeding to alleviate their immediate concern her own first aid kit, as per the student's agreement, the student refused to avail assistance from the medical center when inquired earlier.

Facilitating Communication and Emotional Support (Listen)

The warden then gently inquires if the student is willing to discuss the events leading up to the self-harm incident. Although the student initially remains reticent, the warden continues to offer support by providing water and inquiring about her nutritional intake, which helps to build rapport. Gradually, the student begins to open up, expressing her difficulties with adjusting to hostel life, conflicts with friends, and the deep longing she feels for her mother, whom she is unable to contact.

Simple Relaxation Techniques

” Inhale slowly (one-thousand one; one-thousand two; one-thousand three) through your nose, and comfortably fill your lungs all the way down to your belly. Silently and gently say to yourself, “My body is filling with calm.” Exhale slowly (one-thousand one; one-thousand two; one-thousand three) through your mouth and comfortably empty your lungs all the way down to your abdomen. Silently and gently say to yourself, “My body is releasing tension.” Repeat five times slowly.”

Source: PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID GUIDE for Ohio's Colleges and Universities

Problem-Solving and Continued Support (Listen)

The warden responds empathetically to the student's concerns and suggests potential solutions, such as connecting with family members via phone. When the student explains that her parents are asleep and that she feels neglected by everyone except them, the warden offers reassurance, affirming that she will be able to communicate with her family the following morning. This conversation helps the student feel more at ease, and she eventually expresses a desire to rest.

Follow-up (Link)

Before leaving, the warden provides the student with contact information for mental health professionals at the university counseling center. She advises the student to reach out to them and reassures her that she will also notify the counseling team of the situation. After confirming that the student feels more comfortable and has no immediate needs, the warden exits the room, allowing the student to rest.

In this scenario, the warden demonstrates a methodical and compassionate approach to managing a self-harm incident, ensuring both the immediate safety of the affected student and her longer-term emotional well-being. The emphasis on obtaining consent before physical interaction and facilitating access to mental health resources highlights the importance of respecting the student's autonomy and ensuring continuous support.

3. Case Scenario:

A Student Under the Influence of Drugs Remains in the Classroom After Class Has Ended

(A student remains in the classroom after the session has concluded, exhibiting signs of distress. The class coordinator, trained in PFA-U is notified of the situation and takes immediate, methodical steps to address the crisis.)

Response Protocol (Ensuring Safety/Look)

Upon receiving the report that a student has not vacated the classroom post-session, the PFA-trained coordinator promptly alerts the crisis response team via text message. Recognizing the urgency, she swiftly proceeds to the classroom. Upon arrival, she contacts the building manager to notify the incoming instructor and any waiting students that the upcoming class will be delayed. She ensures that the classroom door is closed to maintain privacy and prevent a crowd from gathering, thereby reducing potential stressors for the student. With only the affected student and a friend remaining in the room, the coordinator introduces herself as a member of the crisis response team. She explains that she is there to provide assistance. The student expresses that he is unable to leave the classroom, fearing he will fall due to dizziness and lethargy. Upon further inquiry, the student discloses that he ingested pills provided by his friend, purportedly for relaxation before an exam, but is now experiencing adverse effects.

Risk Evaluation (Look)

Recognizing the potential involvement of illicit substances based on the student's description, the first responder seeks to ascertain the nature of the situation with precision. She respectfully requests the student's consent to contact the campus medical center. The student initially declines, expressing anxiety. Meanwhile, his friend begins to panic, fearing expulsion or severe disciplinary consequences. The first responder addresses the friend's concerns with a calm, authoritative demeanor, emphasizing that the student's immediate well-being is the top priority. She reassures the friend without making any false promises.

Consent and Medical Assistance (Listen/Assist)

Refocusing on the affected student, the coordinator once again inquires if it

would be acceptable to summon medical assistance, to which the student, albeit apprehensively, consents. The coordinator promptly notifies the crisis response team to dispatch medical personnel to the scene. She also offers the student the option of relocating to a more private setting, suggesting either the dean's office, which is typically used as a safe space, or the campus counseling center. The student expresses a preference for the counseling center, despite its distance.

Resolution and Transition to Counseling Center (Link)

The first responder remains with the student until the medical team arrives, providing continuous support. Once the team is on-site, she accompanies the student to the counseling center, ensuring a seamless transition of care. The coordinator briefs the on-duty counselor, who then assumes responsibility for managing the case.

Conclusion

This comprehensive approach, emphasizing respect for the student's autonomy, privacy, and immediate psychological and medical needs, illustrates the effective application of Psychological First Aid in a potentially high-risk situation.

Note: For more comprehensive understanding of substance use related interventions within university settings, please refer to *"From Risk to Resilience: BNU Substance Use Control Program (SUCP)."*

4. Case Scenario:

(A student gets extremely emotionally overwhelmed after a sudden break-up initiated by his/her partner, followed by intense crying and agitation. His/her friends, after multiple failed attempts to calm him/her down, contact the CRT member)

Ensuring Immediate Safety and Emotional Support (Look/Listen)

The PFA provider arrives promptly, introducing herself as the first responder on the crisis response team. She calmly assesses the situation and gives the student a few minutes to calm down. In the meanwhile, she gathers information about what caused the crisis from the friends. Then she asks the affected student to look and listen to her, and asks the student to take deep breaths with her and, with the student's consent, holds their hands while they do breathing exercises together. This helps the student begin to regain control and calm down. She then takes him/her to the nearest safe space.

Administering Psychological First Aid (Listen/Assist)

Once the student is in a safe space, the PFA provider gently asks what happened. The student explains what triggered him/her. The student begins hyperventilating and shivering, the PFA provider allows him/her to express their emotions, providing reassurance that there are ways to handle the situation. She tells the student that “sometimes we find ourselves overwhelmed after a shocking experience and are unable to stabilize ourselves like usually we do, we can then use a method called “grounding” to recompose emotionally. Here's what you do...

- Sit in a comfortable position with your legs and arms uncrossed.
- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.
- Look around and name five non-distressing objects that you can see. For example, you could say, “I see the floor, I see a shoe, I see a table, I see a chair, I see a person.”
- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.
- Name 3 non-distressing sounds you can hear. For example, you could say, “I hear myself breathing, I hear a door close, I hear a cell phone ringing.”
- Breathe in and out slowly and deeply.

Further Support and Referral (Link)

The first responder recommends visiting the counseling center for further support in managing panic attacks and shares the centre's contact information. After confirming the student's consent, the responder contacts the counseling center to discuss the student's situation and arranges for a meeting as soon as possible.

Conclusion

This scenario highlights the importance of a prompt, empathetic, and supportive response to a panic attack triggered by a sudden shock. The PFA provider's actions not only address the student's immediate emotional distress but also provide practical guidance, ensuring that all steps are taken with the student's consent and in a manner that respects their autonomy and dignity.

5. Case Scenario:

Psychological First Aid Response to Suicidal Ideation Due to Academic and Personal Pressures

(A student, overwhelmed by academic pressures, family problems, and feelings of isolation, posts a message on social media expressing a desire to end their life. A concerned classmate reports the situation to the university's crisis response team.)

Ensuring Immediate Safety and Emotional Support (Look/Listen)

The first responder, a trained counselor, arrives at the student's dorm room shortly after being alerted. They introduce themselves and assess the immediate environment to ensure the student's safety. The responder asks the student for consent to sit and talk, creating a calm and non-threatening atmosphere. They gently inquire how the student is feeling and encourage the student to share their thoughts. The responder listens attentively, acknowledging the student's pain and validating their feelings.

Administering Psychological First Aid (Listen/Assist)

Once the student begins to open up, the responder asks for more details about what led to these feelings of hopelessness. The student reveals that academic failure, coupled with ongoing family issues, has left them feeling overwhelmed and isolated. The responder empathizes with the student's situation and reassures them that they are not alone in facing these challenges. The responder also asks for consent before offering supportive actions, such as discussing breathing exercises to help the student manage their immediate anxiety. The student consents, and the responder guides them through a few minutes of controlled breathing exercises. As the student begins to calm down, the responder gently asks if the student has any plans to harm themselves. The student admits to having thought about it but expresses uncertainty. The responder continues to provide reassurance, emphasizing that help is available and that they do not have to face this alone.

Further Support and Referral (Link)

Recognizing the need for further intervention, the responder explains the importance of speaking with a mental health professional and asks if the student is willing to go to the counseling center. The student agrees, and the responder offers to accompany them to ensure they feel supported. With the

student's consent, the responder contacts the counseling center to inform them of the situation and arrange an immediate appointment. Before leaving, the responder asks the student if they need anything else, such as water or a small snack, to which the student responds positively. The responder also reassures the student that their academic issues can be addressed and that support is available through academic advising and other university resources.

The responder and the student then proceed to the counseling center, where a psychologist is briefed on the situation. The student is introduced to the mental health professional, and the responder stays with the student until they feel comfortable.

Conclusion

This scenario underscores the importance of a prompt, empathetic, and supportive response in managing a situation involving suicidal ideation. The responder's actions address the immediate emotional and safety needs of the student while ensuring that all steps are taken with the student's explicit consent, thereby respecting their autonomy and dignity. The focus on linking the student to ongoing mental health support is crucial for their continued well-being.

Self Care for First Responders



Self-care refers to any activity deliberately done by a person to keep his/her mental, emotional and physical well-being in good state. It is an integral part of optimum functioning and plays a key role in reducing anxiety and mood stabilizing. It is also helps in building and maintaining healthy relationship with oneself and others. This makes it an essential tool for social work surviving skill. Self-care is being able to take care of ones personal, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and psychological needs. It builds resilience against stress and prevents you from getting emotionally overwhelmed.

All of us need a “protective shield” against the harsh blows of life that we experience physically, emotionally and mentally. However, sometimes we find it difficult to in adopting self-care because of several reasons like, lack of energy, pre-occupation with routine tasks, too much workload, too many expectations from others and ourselves, inability to recognize that our own needs also deserve priority and fear of being labelled by others as selfish.

The first responders in any crisis situation witness intense suffering, deal with extremely distressed people and may also get physically injured during the aiding process. Recent studies indicate that due to frequent exposure to traumatic events and high-stress situations, first responders are high likely to develop mental health issues. The frequent exposure to high-stress situations and cumulative exposure to trauma also increases first responders’ risk for developing mental health consequences (McKeon et al., 2019). Another study revealed that the prevalence of anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, PTSD, and alcohol/drug abuse among first responders is higher as compared to the general population (Jones, 2017). Research also indicates that self-care boosts self efficacy and resilience among emergency responders and those taking self-care measures report higher job satisfaction, remarkably less affected by burnout and trauma (Lowery & Cassidy, 2021). If self-care is not well taken care of then it can cause many adverse outcomes like;

Compassion Fatigue

People who have a regular or frequent exposure to other people’s distressful and traumatic experiences and empathize with those individuals can develop feelings of getting affected by the trauma and experience compassion fatigue. Compassion fatigue can escalate anxiety and distress levels. When we say that all “emotions are contagious”, that refers to both good and bad ones.

Compassion fatigue refers to changes in feelings regarding clients and self:

Towards Client:

Low empathy and kindness

Decreased feelings of compassion

Loss of interest

Avoidance behavior

Low satisfaction with your welfare service.

Towards oneself:

Elevated levels of self-doubts regarding one's abilities

- Increased restlessness
- Having feelings of emptiness
- Experiencing physical symptoms like, illness, nausea, headache, backache etc
- Getting easily irritated by others
- Blaming others for your mistakes
- Feelings of being inefficient in terms of your professional commitments.
- Not wanting to indulge in community service.
- Not feeling interested in helping others.
- Feelings of quitting job or avoid going to work.

Self-awareness

Self-awareness means, having a clear understanding of your needs, emotions, thoughts, personality, motivations, beliefs, your strengths and the areas that need improvement. Self-awareness helps you to get a better understanding of people around you and their perception about you and how you respond to them in any given situation. To get an enhanced level of self-awareness, the following tips will be helpful;

Ensure your well-being

Activities and practices that are done regularly to maintain and strengthen your over all well-being and to reduce stress come under self-care. Some of the things that self-care entails are:

- Spending time with family and friends.
- Savouring your favourite meal.
- Indulging in fun activities that you enjoy on a regular basis.
- Regular exercise/walk
- Attending cultural events
- Getting enough rest and sleep

These tips will help in reducing the stress that is related to your physical fatigue and day-to-day problems.

Burnout

Chronic stress or prolonged distress can develop into feelings of fatigue, exhaustion, and ultimately, burnout. It often comes as a result of persistent underlying stress that keeps on cumulating the feelings that you are unable to do multitasking or are unable to balance between different roles. These different roles are related to the four main domains of our lives, personal, professional, social and financial. We start feeling over burdened by the demands or needs of others around us in these domains and also our expectations by ourselves. Burnout is a feeling of defeat and disappointment with the self for failing in fulfilling the obligations related to family and job.

Burnout is not an event that happens often, in fact, its a gradual process. It brings the person to a breaking point where the body starts telling you that “I have had it enough and cannot tolerate this pressure anymore”. It may emerge as a result from working in a non-supportive environment and excessive workload. The specific symptoms of burnout may include:

- Having trouble sleeping
- Disturbed appetite
- Having feelings of resentments against colleagues and family members.

The following practices will help you enhance your psychological, spiritual, interpersonal and emotional self-care;

Give yourself unconditional positive regard.

Be aware of who you are as a person.

Acknowledge your strengths and weaknesses.

Beware of the interpersonal boundaries.

Do not go over-board in terms of taking responsibilities.

Help others and ask for it when needed

When you want to change something, focus on things that are in your control.

Stress Management

A main reason of stress for the first responders while providing PFA-U, is the day-to-day job stress, overwhelming work duties, long working hours, unclear job descriptions, lack of proper and healthy communication, poor management, insecure job environment and witnessing direct or indirect terrible things like death, violence, injury, hearing stories of people suffering from traumas, are examples of work-related stress that can be you and your colleagues may experience in your professional life.

Checkout the following suggestions that can help you in managing your stress: Think about the ways that were helpful positively cope with a difficult situation or emotion. Try those methods that you used to do to stay strong.

- Try to practise mindfulness in everything you do. That means “being present in the moment”. Practise this while eating, resting, bathing etc, even for a short while.
- Keep healthy professional boundaries with your colleagues. Do not give unnecessary favours, keep your working hours reasonable to avoid over exhaustion.

- Be aware of your limitations while providing help to the people. You may feel frustrated or low due to lack of adequate resources or other limitations but remember that you cannot solve every problem of all the people who are in distress.
- Limit your caffeine and/or nicotine intake and avoid alcohol and non-prescription drugs.
- Keep a wellbeing check with fellow colleagues to see how they are doing and have them check in with you.
- Indulge in light chitchats with your friends, family, supervisor or other people you trust for support.
- Share your experience of helping others in an emergency situation with the on campus mental health counselor or a trusted colleague etc.
- Practise self check after the crisis is resolved and see what you did well and what did not go so well. Learn from your experience and make notes for your reference to use in future.
- Take some time off from work if possible, and go on a retreat.

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Appendices



Crisis Report Form

This is a confidential report and should not be made a part of any academic/employee record. It is completed to allow us to understand the nature of crisis and steps taken to resolve it.

Information about the person involved in the incident:	
Name of the person involved in incident:	
Student/employee ID:	Date of incident:
Location:	Time of incident:
Name of the first responder:	
Date of reporting:	

Information about the incident: (check all that apply)				
Nature of the incident	Panic attack	Aggressiveness	Property damage	Substance use
Self harm/suicidal	Other:			
Location of the incident:				
Describe what happened: (please be as specific as possible)				

Was there any physical injury?	Yes	No		
Was medical treatment provided?	Yes	No	Refused	Not required
Was a referral provided?	Yes	No	Refused	Not required
If yes, please describe:				

Steps taken to resolve the crisis:				
Who was contacted:				
Medical center	Counseling center	Security	Department	Administration
How many responders from CRT were required to resolve the issue?				
Please provide details: (Name, designation, department etc):				

Signature: _____



Authorization for Release/Exchange of Information Form

This form gives campus counselor/PFA-U provider with written permission to communicate with other individual(s) (e.g. registrar office, student affairs, VC, parents and/or school) regarding your situation after the recent crisis for intervention reasons.

Student's Name(s): _____

CNIC #: _____

I authorize the campus counselor/PFA-U provider to release/exchange the following information to:

Name: _____

Number: _____

Address: _____

Information to be released:

(Please Check)

_____ Details of the Crisis, _____ Pre/Post Measures to ensure well-being

_____ Counseling/ Response Notes _____ Intake and History _____ Overall Case Details

_____ Other: _____

This release will be valid until the completion of your degree program, employment tenure or authorization from client to revoke,

Expiration date: _____

This authorization may be revoked at any time.

Name of student, staff or Authorized person (print):

Signature of student, parent or Authorized person:

Date: _____

Compassion Fatigue Wallet Card

Caring For Yourself in The Face of Difficult Work	Caring For Yourself in The Face of Difficult Work
Our work can be overwhelming. Our challenge is to maintain our resilience so that we can keep doing the work with care, energy, and compassion.	Our work can be overwhelming. Our challenge is to maintain our resilience so that we can keep doing the work with care, energy, and compassion.
10 things you need to do	10 things you need to do
1. Get enough sleep.	1. Get enough sleep.
2. Get enough to eat.	2. Get enough to eat.
3. Do some light exercise.	3. Do some light exercise.
4. Vary the work that you do.	4. Vary the work that you do.
5. Do something pleasurable.	5. Do something pleasurable.
6. Pray, meditate or relax.	6. Pray, meditate or relax.
7. Support a colleague.	7. Support a colleague.
8. Focus on what you did well	8. Focus on what you did well
9. Listen to your favourite song	9. Listen to your favourite song
10. Learn from your mistakes	10. Learn from your mistakes
Switching On and Off	Switching On and Off
It is your empathy for others helps you do this work. It is vital to take good care of your thoughts and feelings by monitoring how you use them. Resilient workers know how to turn their feelings off when they go on duty, but on again when they go off duty. This is not denial; it is a coping strategy. It is a way they get maximum protection while working (switched off) and maximum support while resting (switched on).	It is your empathy for others helps you do this work. It is vital to take good care of your thoughts and feelings by monitoring how you use them. Resilient workers know how to turn their feelings off when they go on duty, but on again when they go off duty. This is not denial; it is a coping strategy. It is a way they get maximum protection while working (switched off) and maximum support while resting (switched on).
How to become better at switching on and off	How to become better at switching on and off
Switching is a conscious process. Talk to yourself as you switch.	Switching is a conscious process. Talk to yourself as you switch.
Use images that make you feel safe and protected (switch off) or connected and cared for (switch on) to help you switch.	Use images that make you feel safe and protected (switch off) or connected and cared for (switch on) to help you switch.
Breathe slowly and deeply to calm yourself when starting a tough job.	Breathe slowly and deeply to calm yourself when starting a tough job.

Be Well, Be Safe & Be Happy!



Sadia Nawaz Kahoot

Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Sadia Nawaz Kahoot is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and former Head of Centre for Counselling and Psychological Well-being (CCPW) at Beacon house National University (BNU).

With over five years of experience in educational settings, she has worked extensively to promote mental health and psychological support within universities. Recognizing the increasing psychological pressures faced by students, her research and practical experience conducting PFA training at BNU inspired the development of this manual. The book is designed to help train individuals to respond effectively to psychological emergencies and foster mental wellbeing in academic settings.

