

Psychological first aid

What is this?

During periods of crisis, and exposure to traumatic events, people are at risk of psychological injury. Anyone can be affected – it's not a sign of weakness - and most people will recover without serious harm.

If you notice anyone who appears to be distressed or overwhelmed, Psychological First Aid (PFA) is a way of responding and providing support to individuals. It can help to prevent serious psychological harm; it can be done by anyone who is trained to do it; and it's a useful skill for everyone to have.

Why should I be paying attention to this?

During the coronavirus pandemic, many people are feeling more stressed and threatened, not least those working in front line roles in social care. Raising awareness of PFA amongst managers in social care, and helping them to train their staff in PFA is particularly important at this time. Managers themselves may benefit from PFA and you could be the person who can help them if you access training in the important life skill.

What should my first steps be?

Become familiar with the principle of PFA: Look, Listen, Link.

Look	Listen	Link
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check for safety • check for basic needs • check for serious distress reaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approach people who may need help • ask about their needs and concerns • listen and help them to feel calm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help them to address basic needs and safety issues • help them to cope • give them relevant information • connect them with people who can support them

It's important to learn **how** to do this well. Guidance is available through the links below. Consider providing training to all of your staff on PFA- see the link below.

Make PFA part of the way you look out for the welfare of your staff and volunteers.

How do I find out more?

Learn how to do PFA in this PHE approved online course: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-covid-19>

This link will take you to the World Health Organisation guidance on PFA for fieldworkers – a worthwhile read with explanations of 'how to' and 'how not to' do PFA:

https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44615/9789241548205_eng.pdf;jsessionid=8AE19BD6B98B7264E163A5ED2533B147?sequence=1

You'll find information PFA on page 15 of this comprehensive toolkit:

https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/toolkits/play_22794#resume=15