Children Healing After Crisis

Psychological First Aid for Schools is an evidence-informed intervention to assist students, families, and school staff in the immediate aftermath of a crisis or disaster. It assumes that everyone may experience a broad range of reactions; physical, cognitive, psychological, behavioral, spiritual, following a crisis. Some reactions affect student’s academic and social achievement, but support from informed, compassionate and caring professionals can help healing and recovery efforts. [https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-schools-pfa-s-field-operations-guide](https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-schools-pfa-s-field-operations-guide)

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| **Nature and Severity of Experiences** | • Where were you during the crisis?  
• Did you get hurt?  
• Did you see someone get hurt?  
• How afraid were you? | Provide information about post-crisis reactions and coping, reassurance.  
Arrange medical care.  
Provide a sense of safety and calm.  
Tips to help with sleep, mood, academics. |
| **Immediate Safety Concerns and Ongoing Threat** | • Tell me what you understand.  
• Do you have concerns about your safety or the safety of your family, friends or school? | Help obtain information about safety and protection.  
Provide developmentally-appropriate information, as well as available services. |
| **Separations from, or Concern for the Safety of Loved Ones** | • Are you worried about anyone close to you right now? Do you know where they are?  
• Is there anyone you care about missing? | Provide practical assistance to connect people to information resources and registries to help locate and reunite loved ones; e.g. Admin, Red Cross Shelters, Family Reunification Services. |
| **Losses (home, school, neighborhood, property, pets, favorite items, etc.)** | • Was your school/home badly damaged or destroyed?  
• What did you lose that is important to you? | Provide emotional comfort.  
Provide practical assistance to help link student/family to available resources.  
Provide information about social support. |
| **Extreme Feelings of Guilt and Shame** | • Do you feel that some part of the incident was your fault?  
• Do you feel you could have done something differently? | Provide emotional comfort.  
Provide information about positive coping with these distressing emotions.  
Provide relaxation techniques. |
| **Prior Alcohol or Drug Use** | • Have you been using alcohol, drugs or prescription medications to stop thinking about the event? | Link to appropriate services.  
For those undergoing withdrawal, seek a medical referral. Offer a follow-up meeting. |
| **Prior Exposure to Trauma and Death of Loved Ones** | • Sometimes events like this can remind people of previous trauma or loss. Have you experienced this type of situation before? | Provide information about post-crisis and grief reactions; coping and resources.  
Take note of students who report trauma reminders, as they may have future academic or behavioral problems. |