



School Safety and Security

May 2019

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>

Areas of concern	Questions to Ask	PFA-S Intervention Strategies
Nature and Severity of Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.



For more information on the bulletin topic, please contact the MEMA Public Information Officer Susan Faloon at susan.faloon@maine.gov