Psychological First Aid

Responding to Emergencies, Crises, and Disasters at CMU

Ross Rapaport, Director
Counseling Center
Central Michigan University
September 23, 2013
Within your emergency response plans, there is a need to be as prepared to manage the psychological aspects of the catastrophic incident as you are the physical, medical, environmental, reputational, financial and other aspects.

–The Risk Management Toolkit

No one who experiences a disaster is untouched by it.

-Unknown
Reason For This Presentation

During and in the aftermath of an emergency, crisis, or disaster; the emotional health and wellbeing of the CMU community is a CMU Crisis Response Team priority.

CMU Chief of Police Bill Yeagley emphasized this point during Spring 2013 CRT meetings.
Reason For This Presentation

- Spring semester 2013 Bill Yeagley asked Michelle Bigard and Ross Rapaport to develop ideas on how the CRT could address the psychological and emotional concerns that typically occur during and in the aftermath of a crisis.

- He asked that this information could be posted on a website and include resources faculty can use in classes and that is useful for other members of the CMU community; and asked that this information be accessible should a counselor not be in attendance at a CRT meeting.

- Psychological First Aid accomplishes this charge.
Presentation Overview

• Introduce Psychological First Aid (PFA)
• PFA at Colleges and Universities
• PFA Resources - Manuals and Apps
• PFA Training Resources
• Recommendations to the Crisis Response Team Concerning Applying PFA to CMU Crisis Response Plans
YouTube PFA Video

Psychological First Aid - Minnesota Department of Health (11 minutes)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa7WiL1xwQg

For supporting information see: Minnesota Psychological First Aid Training

http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/practice/minnesota-psychological-first-aid-training
PFA key actions are to promote:

• Safety
• Calm and comfort
• Connectedness
• Self-empowerment

For some, PFA may seem basic; for others PFA provides new information; for many, a little of both.
PFA Development

• Developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and the National Center for PTSD.

• Adapted for colleges and universities by the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH): University Linkages Committee.

• Is widely used throughout the United States and the rest of the world.

• Can be delivered by non-mental health and mental health providers.
PFA principles and techniques meet four basic standards. They are:

1. Consistent with research evidence on risk and resilience following trauma

2. Applicable and practical in field settings

3. Appropriate for developmental levels across the life span

4. Culturally informed and delivered in a flexible manner
What is PFA?

• PFA is an evidenced-informed modular method of guiding responses to provide psychological and emotional support and assistance to people of all ages who have experienced trauma.

• PFA is used during the immediate aftermath (hours, days, weeks) of emergencies, disasters, terrorism and other traumatic events.

• PFA is designed to reduce the initial stress caused by these events and foster short and long term adaptive functioning and coping skills.
What is PFA?

• Helpful to people of diverse backgrounds and ages

• Can be delivered by anyone who has received the PFA training

• Appropriate for use in field settings

• Can be provided to individuals and groups

From “Psychological First Aid: Responding to Emergencies at Colleges and Universities”
PowerPoint November 2012
Used with permission from Craig Vickio, Ph.D., Bowling Green State University Counseling Center
ODMH University Linkages Committee July 2013
What is PFA?

PFA is NOT

• Therapy
• Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

Offering PFA involves redefining what is means to offer “help”

From “Psychological First Aid: Responding to Emergencies at Colleges and Universities”
PowerPoint November 2012
Used with permission from Craig Vickio, Ph.D., Bowling Green State University Counseling Center
ODMH University Linkages Committee July 2013
After a traumatic event, who will need PFA?

• Some individuals who are most directly impacted will not need or want PFA.

• Some who appear far removed from the traumatic event will need PFA.

• Key groups who are “at risk” include....?

From “Psychological First Aid: Responding to Emergencies at Colleges and Universities”
PowerPoint November 2012
Used with permission from Craig Vickio, Ph.D., Bowling Green State University Counseling Center
ODMH University Linkages Committee July 2013
PFA Assumptions

• PFA does not assume that all survivors will develop severe mental health problems or long-term difficulties.

• PFA is based on an understanding that disaster survivors and others affected by such events will experience a broad range of early reactions (for example, physical, psychological, behavioral, spiritual).

• Some of these reactions will cause enough distress to interfere with adaptive coping, and recovery may be helped by support from compassionate and caring disaster responders.
PFA Objectives are to:

1. Establish a human connection in a non-intrusive, compassionate manner.
2. Enhance immediate and ongoing safety and provide physical and emotional comfort.
3. Calm and orient emotionally overwhelmed or distraught survivors.
4. Help survivors tell you specifically what their immediate needs and concerns are, and gather additional information as appropriate.
PFA Objectives are to (continued):

5. Offer practical assistance and information to help survivors address their immediate needs and concerns.

6. Connect survivors as soon as possible to social support networks, including family members, friends, and neighbors.

7. Support adaptive coping, acknowledge coping efforts and strengths, and empower survivors; encourage adults, children, and families to take an active role in their recovery.
PFA Objectives are to (continued):

8. Provide information that may help survivors cope effectively with the psychological impact of disasters.

9. When appropriate, link the survivor to another member of a disaster response team or to local recovery systems, mental health services, public-sector services, and organizations.

10. PFA is designed for delivery in diverse settings and locations.
Psychological First Aid Overview

1. Preparing to Deliver Psychological First Aid
2. Contact and Engagement
3. Safety and Comfort
4. Stabilization
5. Information Gathering: Current Needs and Concerns
6. Practical Assistance
7. Connection with Social Supports
8. Information on Coping
9. Linkage with Collaborative Services
PFA Resources

Take Away Point - PFA actions are designed to promote:

• Safety
• Calm and comfort
• Connectedness
• Self-empowerment

PFA Mobil App
• Materials are adapted from the Psychological First Aid Field Operations Guide (2nd Edition).
  http://www.sph.umn.edu.ce/perl/mobile/pfatutorial/

- [http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid](http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid) (Includes English, Spanish, Japanese and Chinese translations)

- [http://www ptsd va gov/professional/manuals/psych-first-aid asp](http://www ptsd va gov/professional/manuals/psych-first-aid asp) (Includes link to PFA APP)
PFA Resources (continued)

Psychological First Aid: A Guide for Responding to Emergencies at Colleges and Universities (DRAFT)

• Includes handouts for survivors

• Adapted by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network National Center for PTSD and the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH): University Linkages Committee.

PFA Online Training

• University of Minnesota PHET Series: Crisis Intervention During Disaster (About 20-40 minutes) [http://www.sph.umn.edu/ce/online/](http://www.sph.umn.edu/ce/online/)


• National Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma (About 5-6 hours) [http://learn.nctsn.org/](http://learn.nctsn.org/)
PFA Online Training (continued)

Applied Specifically to Colleges and Universities

- The Ohio Criminal Justice Coordinating Center of Excellence and the Ohio Department of Mental Health (about 4-5 hours)

- Train the Trainer PowerPoint
  [http://ssc.bibalex.org/viewer/detail.jsf;jsessionid=263C8B9D1E949FC4292312C1238E3CDB?lid=E993B17DF4F50063D0C239B1BD49C692&aid=F749A4C0BC3130E62DF0AF5E593F2979&category=4853D4C0E19AB098317DD80545BA74D6&sort=4&page=31](http://ssc.bibalex.org/viewer/detail.jsf;jsessionid=263C8B9D1E949FC4292312C1238E3CDB?lid=E993B17DF4F50063D0C239B1BD49C692&aid=F749A4C0BC3130E62DF0AF5E593F2979&category=4853D4C0E19AB098317DD80545BA74D6&sort=4&page=31) (From website July 9, 2013)
PFA Online Training (continued)

YouTube video (About 7 ½ minutes)

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) in collaboration with The Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council (MCHC), and Chicago Healthcare System Coalition (CHSCPR)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFe1pFJE03E
Recommendations to the CMU Crisis Response Team (CRT)

Recommendation 1
The CMU Crisis Response Team endorses using Psychological First Aid (PFA) to address psychological and emotional concerns that may occur following a traumatic event involving the CMU community.

(PFA providers do not need to be mental health professionals; however they need to be trained.)
Recommendations to CRT

Recommendation 2
Co-coordinators of CMU PFA are appointed, at least one of whom does not work in the Counseling Center.

Recommendation 3
A CRT identified group of PFA trained faculty, staff and students is maintained over time to activate when needed. (The Yeagley “Swat Team Model”.)
Recommendations to CRT

Recommendation 4
PFA trainers are identified; CMU specific training developed and/or or national on-line training is completed by CMU PFA providers.

Recommendation 5
CMU faculty, staff and students are invited to complete PFA training.
Recommendations to CRT

Recommendation 6
The PFA training manuals, including handouts and related information, are posted on the CMU Emergency Preparedness Website, both internal and external.

Recommendation 7
A plan to disseminate crisis classroom instruction and related information is developed in consultation with FaCIT. Then this information is disseminated to faculty, staff who teach, G.A.s, etc.
Recommendations to CRT

Recommendation 8
All CRT members are encouraged to install the PFA mobile app on their mobile device(s) and periodically review this information.

Recommendation 9
The **CMU CRT Emergency Response Checklist & Guide** is expanded to include a section on Psychological First Aid as applied to CMU.
References

The information in this power point is from the following:


- **Psychological First Aid (PFA) Tutorial Mobile APP.** Developed by the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. [http://www.sph.umn.edu/ce/perl/mobile/pfatutorial/](http://www.sph.umn.edu/ce/perl/mobile/pfatutorial/)

- **Psychological First Aid: Responding to Emergencies at Colleges and Universities.** PowerPoint November 2012. Used with permission from Craig Vickio, Ph.D., Bowling Green State University Counseling Center ODMH University Linkages Committee July 9, 2013
