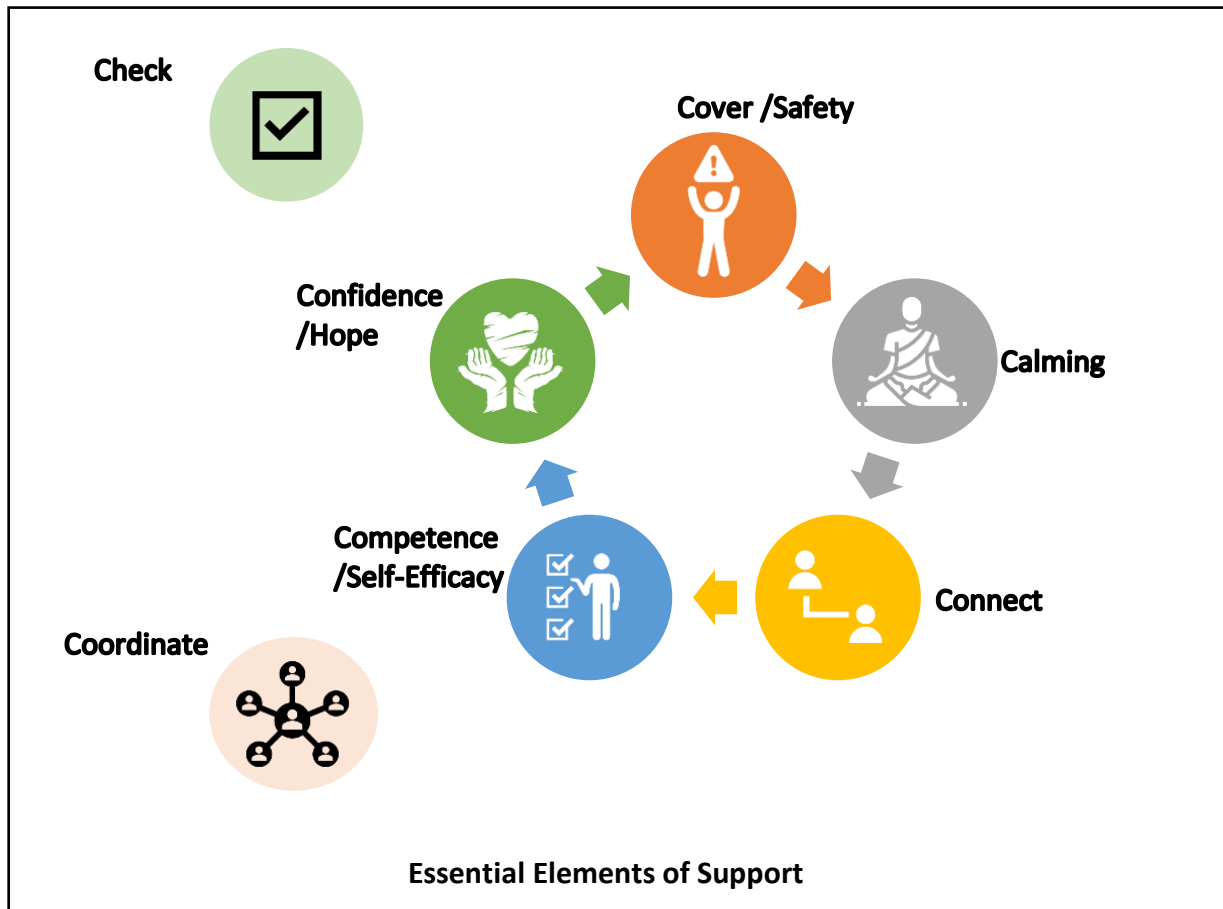


Person-Centered Stress First Aid (SFA): Psychosocial Support in Crisis Situations



1. **Check** - What does this person need?
2. **Cover/Safety** – Moving people toward a psychological sense of safety
3. **Calming**- what can I do to help them become calmer
4. **Connect** - What can I do to help them feel more social support?
5. **Competence/Self-efficacy** - How can I help them gain or refresh skills that will help us feel we can get through this?
6. **Confidence/Hope** - How can I help them have more confidence, sense of meaning, or hope?
7. **Coordinate** – What additional resources does this person need?

Components of each SFA Action

SFA action has three parts:

Approach: How you establish rapport with the person through respect and compassion.

Information: What information to both collect and give, and how to manage the process.

Direction: How to direct a person's actions in a way that supports the person and increases their ability to comply with your requests.

Approach



(Convey respect, care, compassion)

Maintain an approach that conveys respect, care, and compassion:

- Show calm empathy –Recognize where this person is coming from. Have respectful, courteous, helpful attitude
- Introduce self and role - "I'm here to help, my name is, my role is.."
- Speak clearly and in simple language
- Make sure the person understands suggestions
- Take your cues from the person - Meet them where they are and recognize they are grieving.
- Validate and acknowledge resilience
- Set helpful boundaries

Information



(Exchange in a helpful way)

Get and give information in helpful ways:

- Collect enough information so that you can understand crucial needs and priorities.
- Give simple and accurate information, focused on how the person can address their concerns.
- Make sure the person appears ready and able to understand what is being asked or said.
- If you do not have an answer to the person's question, do not guess in order to provide reassurance. Instead, provide a way to get the needed information.

Direction




(Focus them and reduce distress)


Direct people in a way that focuses them and reduces distress:


- Provide clear and positive direction, telling the person what to do rather than what not to do.
- If a person is in the middle of a stressful situation, ask them what can distract them and/or makes them feel they are accomplishing something.
- Involve the person in developing a simple action plan that focuses on and prepares them for what they can control.
- Make sure the plan is feasible and realistic.
- Positively acknowledge the action plan and brainstorm solutions to any potential obstacles to the plan.
- Have the person commit to taking first steps towards the action plan.

Stress First Aid Core Actions

 <p>Check (gather info)</p>	What does this person need?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow their lead • Minimize interruptions • No expectations or judgements • Current rather than past focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reflective and supportive comments • Clarify concerns • Collect enough information to understand crucial needs • Repeat as needed


The following examples are provided to give ideas but may or may not be helpful actions in all circumstances. Use them as possible options only, but always use your own context to guide what will be most helpful.


 <p>Cover (Safety)</p>	How can I foster a greater sense of safety?	
	<p>Examples of Public Health Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring people to a safe place and make it clear that it is safe. • Provide an accurate, organized voice to increase the perception of safety where there is no serious threat. • Inform the media to convey safety and resilience messages whenever possible. • Encourage individuals to limit exposure to news media overall, and to avoid media that contain graphic film or photos if they are experiencing increased distress following viewing. • Teach people how to discriminate between political propaganda and more realistic information regarding threat in the context of war and terrorism. 	<p>Examples of Individual/Group Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell people that when they feel unsafe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively seek information • Get an accurate understanding of risks in order to better plan • Get help with personal responsibilities • Request help from others • Distract yourself by focusing on something near you, your own breath or thought (e.g., counting), or current sensations (sight, sound, smell, touch) to be in the present moment • Call on whatever people, places, or actions feel safe to you from moment to moment

 <p>Calm</p>	How can I help them become calmer?	
	<p>Examples of Public Health Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in actions that help people directly solve concerns, bolster resources and preventing resource loss. • Give status updates about family, friends, impending danger. 	<p>Examples of Individual/Group Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help people see that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is understandable and expected that they are feeling anxious and worried about what may happen. • They can practice slow, steady breathing and muscle relaxation, as well as any other actions that are calming • Sometimes it is calming to break problems into small steps, get advice or help, and find out what others are doing. • It can also be helpful to include distracting activities such as being with others, reading, listening to music. • They should reduce news watching if they become too stressed when watching, particularly prior to sleep.

Not Recommended for calming:

- Giving inaccurate information in order to calm people, which ultimately undermines credibility and is counterproductive.
- Psychological debriefing or trying to encourage people to “process” what happened when they are still in the midst of chaos, which may increase distress.
- Alcohol, which can lead to potential misuse and other alcohol-related behaviors.
- Benzodiazepine tranquilizers, which can increase risk of PTSD despite initial calming effects.

How can I help them have more social support?		
 <p>Connect</p>	Examples of Public Health Measures	Examples of Individual/Group Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help individuals to identify and link with loved ones. • Increase the quantity, quality, and frequency of supportive transactions. • Address potential negative social influences (i.e., mistrust, in-group/out-group dynamics, impatience with recovery, exhaustion, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it a priority to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep individuals connected • help people access support • provide support yourself • Enhance specific types of social support, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • emotional closeness • feeling needed • reliable alliance • advice • physical assistance

How can I help them gain resources or skills to be more competent?		
 <p>Competence (Self-efficacy)</p>	Examples of Public Health Measures	Examples of Individual/Group Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide people with resources. • Involve people in decision-making • Promote any community activities that enhance survival capacities, increase resilience and quality of life, or foster sense of control and mastery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help people see that it can be helpful to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out information to improve their ability to make decisions and take actions when necessary. • Problem-solve and set achievable goals within the new context. • Listen to the guidance of those who have been faced with life-threatening situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quickly recognize, acknowledge, and accept the reality of the situation. • Make a plan for dealing with feelings of being overwhelmed or overly distressed. Preparation can make you feel more in control if these feelings arise and help you move through them quickly. • Combat unhelpful emotions by using distraction or staying busy---both mentally and physically. • Rather than getting discouraged, focus on what you can accomplish or control. • Try to engage in the situation as a challenge to be met, which can increase your ability to act both creatively and decisively.



Confidence
(Hope)

How can I help them have more confidence or hope?

Examples of Public Health Measures

- Help people with:
 - Linking with resources
 - Sharing their experience
 - Memorializing and making meaning
 - Accepting what has changed
 - Accurate risk assessment
 - Reducing self-blame
 - Problem-solving
 - Building strengths that they have as individuals and communities

Examples of Individual/Group Measures

- Help people to:
 - Realize that what they are experiencing is understandable and to be expected
 - Look for opportunities to practice being more patient or kind with themselves.
 - Take small breaks from the stress of the situation, if possible
 - Take satisfaction in helping others, or completing tasks, even small ones
 - Find things to be grateful about, if possible.
 - Draw upon spirituality, those who inspire, or personal beliefs and values
 - Reduce exaggeration of their own personal responsibility for what is happening
 - Find what they think might work for them from moment to moment



Coordinate

What additional resources do they need?

Examples of Public Health Measures

- Find and build networks of those who might help with more significant mental, physical, or resource needs
- Update information about these resources regularly
- Share the best ways for people to get connected to these resources

Examples of Individual/Group Measures

Consider referring the person to more specialized help if they:

- have not been able to sleep for the last week
- are confused and disorientated
- are so distressed that they are unable to function normally and care for themselves or their children
- report losing control over their behavior and behaving in unpredictable or destructive ways
- threaten harm to themselves or others
- report excessive and/or out-of-the-ordinary use of drugs or alcohol
- have chronic health conditions and need more supports
- report symptoms of severe mental health conditions
- are experiencing violence or abuse.