

## DISASTER SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL CARE TIP SHEETS

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>How to Provide Psychological First Aid</b>
<b>Aim:</b>	To provide caregivers with the basic actions of Psychological First Aid in order that they can assist those who have been affected by a disaster.
<b>General Information:</b>	Providing early assistance (e.g., within days or weeks following an event) may prevent or lessen the effects of posttraumatic stress. These objectives will need to be addressed in a flexible way, using strategies that meet the specific needs of disaster survivors. The amount of time spent on each goal will vary from person to person, and with different circumstances according to need.
<b>Contact and Engagement:</b>	<p>Goal: To respond to contacts initiated by affected persons, or initiate contacts in a non-intrusive, compassionate, and helpful manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help survivors consider coping options.</li> <li>• Identify and acknowledge their coping strengths.</li> <li>• Explore the negative consequences of maladaptive coping actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Safety and Comfort:</b>	<p>Goal: To enhance immediate and ongoing safety; and provide physical and emotional comfort:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance a sense of control over coping and adjustment.</li> <li>• Avoid getting angry or violent.</li> </ul>
<b>Stabilization:</b>	<p>Goal: To calm and orient emotionally-overwhelmed/distraught survivors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting adequate rest, diet, exercise.</li> <li>• Engaging in positive distracting activities (sports, hobbies, reading).</li> <li>• Trying to maintain a normal schedule to the extent possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Information Gathering - Current Needs and Concerns:</b>	<p>Goal: To identify immediate needs and concerns, gather additional information, and tailor Psychological First Aid interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage survivors to make conscious choices about how to cope.</li> <li>• Avoid using alcohol or drugs to cope.</li> <li>• Prevent withdrawing from activities.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Practical Assistance:</b></p>	<p>Goal: To offer practical help to the survivor in addressing immediate needs and concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeking counseling.</li> <li>• Participating in a support group.</li> <li>• Using relaxation methods.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Connection with Social Supports:</b></p>	<p>Goal: To help establish brief or ongoing contacts with primary support persons or other sources of support, including Family members, friends, and community helping resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking to another person for support.</li> <li>• Avoid withdrawing from Family or friends.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Information on Coping:</b></p>	<p>Goal: To provide information (about stress reactions and coping) to reduce distress and promote adaptive functioning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage healthy coping skills used before the disaster whenever possible.</li> <li>• Generate ideas about coping strategies with limited resources after the disaster.</li> <li>• Encourage positive religious coping strategies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Linkage with Collaborative Services:</b></p>	<p>Goal: To link survivors with needed services, and inform them about available services that may be needed in the future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide with list of resources and mental health agencies.</li> <li>• Encourage survivors to develop a plan for seeking additional support and resources.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Resources:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harding, S. (2007). <i>Spiritual care and mental health for disaster response and recovery</i>. New York: New York Disaster Interfaith Services.</li> <li>• National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2006). <i>Psychological first-aid: Field operations guide for community religious professionals</i>. Los Angeles, CA: Author.</li> <li>• National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. (2009). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Points of Consensus</i>. Arlington, VA: Author.</li> <li>• National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. <i>Light our way: A guide for spiritual care in times of disasters</i>. Arlington, VA: Author.</li> <li>• Roberts, S., &amp; Ashley, W. (2008). <i>Disaster spiritual care: Practical clergy responses to community, regional, and national tragedy</i>. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing.</li> </ul>

CITATION: Aten, J., & Boan, D. (2012). *Tip sheet: How to provide psychological first aid*. Wheaton, IL: Humanitarian Disaster Institute, Wheaton College.

