



Psychological First Aid for Service Providers

Q&A from Webinar, May 19, 2020

Presenters:

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Q: Can PFA be delivered in groups, not just to individuals?

Typically PFA is delivered individually. However, we have at least one colleague who is currently delivering PFA in groups. It does fit within a group modality of delivery as long as a group leader is able to attend to individual's needs (since most won't need all core actions of PFA) and can be sure to minimize disclosure of trauma memory details in group setting. Individual follow-up or interactions may be needed as an adjunct to group in some cases.

Q: Can PFA be useful for any type of personal crisis, not just mass crises?

PFA is a set of good crisis-intervention strategies that is adapted to fit the context of a mass trauma. However, it can be applied to other crises as well as mass trauma. It does have some things inherent in it that imply mass exposure- but they can be adapted. It might be also worth considering whether other approaches are more appropriate.

Q: Are there any tips for tailoring this method specifically for COVID?

The tailoring for COVID includes recognizing the ongoing nature of this stressor- it is very much a chronic stressor with periods of increased acute stress and exposure depending on someone's role and experience during the crisis. There is also increased emphasis on building supports remotely due to social isolation recommendations and increased emphasis on coping strategies that are doable remotely and can be sustained long term as the crisis continues to unfold.

Q: How do you become a trainer in PFA?

We are not aware of any formal protocol for becoming a trainer. Individuals who are trained in PFA from a prior training or from one of the online resources, use PFA with clients, and have extensive experience in working with trauma recovery are likely competent to train others. It is a treatment that is meant to be non-proprietary and available freely in the public domain and thus available for those with relevant knowledge and expertise to disseminate to others who are qualified. The training process is not formalized or controlled to our knowledge.

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Q: How can our staff become trained in PFA?

The online training through the NCPTSD and NCTSN is free and publicly available. It is ~6 hours and is accessed at: https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/continuing_ed/psych_firstaid_training.asp.

We also heard from one of the attendees at this webinar of other PFA trainings being offered through www.Bolante.NET. Their website has additional details.

For more information, please see:

Trauma Recovery Innovations

The Program for Trauma Recovery Innovations (TRI) develops and tests accessible treatments for mental health concerns resulting from trauma exposure.

Although trauma exposure is common and associated with tremendous societal and personal costs, existing effective treatments do not reach patients where they show up for healthcare, take too long for many patients to complete and are complicated to learn and deliver.

<https://psychiatry.uw.edu/research/trauma-recovery-innovations/>



Northwest (HHS Region 10)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

We provide training and technical assistance (TA) in evidence-based practices (EBPs) in SAMHSA's Region 10 (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington). Our target workforce includes behavioral health and primary care providers, school and social service staff, and others whose work has the potential to improve behavioral health outcomes for individuals with or at risk of developing serious mental illnesses.

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the MHTTC Network includes 10 Regional Centers, a National American Indian and Alaska Native Center, a National Hispanic and Latino Center, and a Network Coordinating Office. This work is supported by grant SM 081721 from the Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/northwest-mhttc/home>