
EARLY INTERVENTION AND ALTERING BARRIERS TO CARE FOR TRAUMATIC STRESS AND PTSD INTERVENTION HANDBOOK

Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress
Department of Psychiatry
Uniformed Services University



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Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress
Department of Psychiatry
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
4301 Jones Bridge Road
Bethesda, MD 20814-4799
www.CSTOnline.org

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ORIENTATION

Outline

- A. Introduction
- B. Description of intervention program
 - Workshops and Handouts
 - Web site, email and telephone information services
- C. Brief training
 - Principles of Psychological First Aid
 - First PFA Principle: Safety

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon, my name is _____ and I am joined by _____. We are from _____. We have learned a great deal from you about the nature of your mission, about the challenges you face, and your concerns.

Overview of the Intervention Program

We are here to talk to you today about an educational training and resource program that we developed using the knowledge and experiences you have shared with our team. The program is based on the concept of Psychological First Aid (PFA), a set of recommended principles developed by the National Center for PTSD, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and others for assisting people after disasters and other traumatic events. We have adapted the PFA principles to make them applicable to Soldiers and their spouses in dealing with adjustments associated with the return from deployment. PFA emphasizes five concepts: Safety, Calming, Connecting, Self-efficacy and Hope/Optimism.

The education and training program combines a series of three workshops and a booster workshop, which will review all the material covered. To augment this training there is a series of web site resources as well as an email service and a toll-free telephone information line that are staffed by our team members to assist you with questions. With your agreement, the education and training program will also be offered to your spouses. Spouses will have the opportunity to attend their own training workshops and have access to the on-line materials, email service and toll-free telephone information line.

This program, based on the principles of Psychological First Aid, may help you and your family gain knowledge and skills to better adapt to current challenges, and to help you through times of adversity that you may face in the future.

Description of Program Services

Workshops and Handouts

The format of each of these workshops will be very similar: An overview of PFA will be followed by an in depth look at one or two of the principles of PFA, and how they might be applied to your life situations. Service members have told us about typical post-deployment challenges and concerns and we will weave some of these themes into the presentations. We will talk about how you can apply the PFA principles to your life and how you can use them to support a buddy or someone else. We'll also talk about the things that get in the way of seeking outside assistance—even when we know we aren't handling a situation well ourselves. We call these barriers to care.

We will also distribute handouts relevant to the topics that were discussed that day. The handouts are for you to read and keep. We recommend putting them all together in the folder we provide so you will be able to find and refer to them as needed.

Web Site, Email and Telephone Information Services

We want to tell you more about the web site, email and telephone information services available to you. As part of the education and training program, you and your spouse will have access to the TEAM web site, email service and the telephone information line. The TEAM web site has program information including synopses of the education and training curricula, copies of the handouts you receive in the workshops, additional handouts that are not distributed in the workshops, and links to resources and our contact information. You can access the web site anytime at XX.

The email service and toll free telephone information line are available for you and your spouse to contact us with any questions or comments you may have about what is learned in the workshops. The email address is XX. You can send an email to us at any time and we will respond during weekday duty hours. The number to the toll free telephone information line is XX. The telephone line is staffed by members of our group during weekday duty hours. The phone line is equipped with an answering machine so you can leave a message at any time and we will return your call.

For ease of accessing these resources, the address to the web site, the email address and the number to the telephone information line are printed at the bottom of all handouts. The email address and number to the telephone line are also listed on the web site.

Spouse Participation Information (Optional)

We are now distributing an invitation to the education and training program for spouses. For those of you with a spouse, please take the invitation home with you today and give it to your spouse. It describes the spouse program and invites your spouse to participate. The invitation states why it is important for your spouse to participate and lets him/her know that we will be making contact with him/her soon. Please give the invitation to your spouse today.

Brief Education and Training

We have a few more things to talk about. We are going to talk about Psychological First Aid and the first principle of PFA, Safety. Then we have another handout for you.

Introduction to Psychological First Aid

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handout: *Five Principles of Psychological First Aid*

We are distributing a handout of the five principles of Psychological First Aid. The five principles are Safety, Calming, Connecting, Self-efficacy and Hope/Optimism. The principles of PFA can be applied to the social, interpersonal and occupational challenges that you may encounter. The skills you learned to deal with challenges during your deployment may not be useful or apply to the challenges you now face at home. The workshops will help you learn and apply the PFA principles to the challenges you face and help you overcome barriers to seeking healthcare when problems are too big to solve on your own. In each of the upcoming workshops, we will use examples of the real-life challenges you face to illustrate how PFA works.

Safety

The first principle of Psychological First Aid (PFA) is Safety—making your environment as safe as possible. Downrange safety meant things like securing the perimeter, setting up security checkpoints, establishing and practicing tactics for engaging the enemy and identifying a battle buddy who would look out for you. At home, safety means both feeling safe and being safe. Sometimes when people have very bad or traumatic experiences their sense (feelings) of safety can change. They may start to feel unsafe in places and situation where they are actually safe. Feeling safe is a basic need. We all need to feel safe to effectively function. In the upcoming workshops we will talk more about feeling safe and ways to change our sense of safety. Safety also means being safe and watching out for different types of problems such as the consequences of excessive alcohol use, risky behaviors, driving too fast, or spending too much money. Responsible use of alcohol can be part of a good time

with friends, but a DUI or alcohol related accident could have a great negative impact on your career and have secondary effects on your family. If you go out and party, call a taxi or identify a buddy as your designated driver to watch out for you and keep you safe.

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handout: *Resources List*

The handout, *Resources List*, has phone numbers for national and local support services. Also, if either you or your buddy becomes concerned about drinking or its effects, there are phone numbers and web links on the handout that can provide more information. The point of the first principle of PFA is “safety first.” Besides taking care of yourself, take care of your buddy too!

Conclusion/Close

We appreciate you spending your time with us today. We will stay here for a while to answer any questions you may have. Thanks a lot for your attention.

----- End of Orientation -----

WORKSHOP 1

Outline

- A. Introduction
- B. Principles of Psychological First Aid
- C. Common Reactions to Difficult Events
 - Intrusive reactions, avoidance and withdrawal, physical arousal, trauma reminders, change reminders, grief reactions, depression, anxiety, guilt/shame, physical reactions
 - Secondary adversities
- D. Basic Coping
 - Good/bad coping strategies
 - Coping Within the Family
- E. Other Common Concerns
 - Anger Management
 - Highly Negative Emotions (Guilt & Shame)
 - Sleep Problems
 - Alcohol and Substance Use
- F. Safety
 - Buddy Care— Safety

Introduction

Thank you all for agreeing to participate in this training program. Today is our first workshop. We will begin with a brief overview of Psychological First Aid (PFA) and then talk about common reactions to stressful events, basic methods of coping, and some problems that are more specific to returning from a deployment.

This educational program is based on the concept of Psychological First Aid (PFA), a set of recommended principles developed by the National Center for PTSD, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and others for assisting people after disasters and other traumatic events. We have adapted the PFA principles to make them applicable to Soldiers and their spouses in dealing with difficult events and return from deployment.

Just a reminder, we have available a toll-free telephone information line (XX) or email service (XX) as well as information available at the web site (XX). Before we begin the training, do you have any questions? Ok, great!

Principles of Psychological First Aid

We know that you encounter many difficult situations. While deployed, you may have experienced, seen or thought about such things as:

- Physical aspects of human remains (burned, decomposed, mutilated, dismembered, and others)

- Handling personal effects of the deceased
- Learning about the life of the deceased
- Contact with members of the unit of the deceased
- Contact with local nationals who have lost family members
- Working with remains of insurgents
- Not being able to talk about your work with family or Soldiers outside of the mortuary field
- Being avoided by other Soldiers because of your mortuary duties

You may have also faced:

- Fatigue from long hours and irregular sleep cycles
- Lack of logistical and personal support
- Worry about your personal safety
- Lack of communication with family back home
- Worries about your family back home
- Missing important events like birthdays and holidays
- Money problems
- Lack of enjoyable activities while downrange

The hardships of being deployed and away from family can place considerable strains on Soldiers and families and can compromise the process of moving on with life. We present this education and training program after your deployment because the principles on which it is based, the five principles of PFA, are meant to help one better cope with stressful events and manage our reactions to those events.

The five main principles of PFA are:

1. Physical and psychological safety
2. Calming
3. Connecting
4. Self-efficacy (an individual's psychological and practical ability to manage demands of the environment) and collective-efficacy (a groups ability to manage demands of the environment)
5. Hope/optimism

We will talk about psychological and physical safety later today and cover the other principles in detail in the next two workshops. As we proceed, consider how the PFA skills we will discuss relate to stressful events you are working through or may face in the future.

Common Reactions to Difficult Events

We are going to be using the term “*difficult event*” in our discussions to describe any events that fall into the range of mildly stressful to very traumatic and challenging. For example, difficult events can include natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes or tornadoes or man-made disasters such as industrial accidents or war. Difficult events can also be personal events such as relationship problems, conflicts with other individuals, financial problems or many other types of events you find stressful.

We have all experienced difficult events, some long-term, some short-term and some much more stressful than others. Our reactions to these events can vary considerably. Immediate reactions to very stressful events might include alarm, fright and tension. Longer-term reactions might include feelings of anxiety, grief or hopelessness and troubling memories of the event.

Learning Objectives

- To understand common reactions to stressful events

*******Provider note:** Avoid pathologizing Soldiers’ responses; don’t use terms like “symptoms” or “disorder.” Avoid providing “blanket” reassurance that stress reactions will disappear. Such reassurances may set up unrealistic expectations about the time it takes to recover.

Optional Activity

- Play a video clip that illustrates the concept of stress reactions. One possible clip is from the movie *The Incredibles*. In that clip, Mr. Incredible has had a bad day at work, gets stuck in traffic, breaks the door on his car, and loses control. A neighbor boy sees his stress reactions. Sites such as www.wingclips.com have brief video clips available for download.

Now we are going to talk about possible reactions to difficult events, including events that could be considered traumatic. First, we are going to talk about three types of posttraumatic stress reactions: 1) intrusive reactions, 2) avoidance and withdrawal reactions, and 3) physical arousal reactions. Then, we will talk about reminders of traumatic events and other common reactions. We will go on to talk about general strategies for coping with stress and then get into some common problems that may occur after difficult events.

1. Intrusive reactions are ways in which a traumatic experience comes back to mind. These reactions include distressing thoughts or mental images of an event (for example, picturing what one saw), or dreams about what happened. Intrusive reactions also include upsetting emotional or physical reactions to reminders of the experience. Some people may feel and act like one of their worst experiences is happening all over again. This

is called a “flashback.” Naturally, we want to avoid things that are harmful and remember what they are so we don’t experience them again, but we don’t want to be recalling and thinking about danger when no danger is present; that would be an intrusive reaction.

2. *Avoidance and withdrawal reactions* are ways people keep away from, or protect against, intrusive reactions. This includes trying to avoid talking, thinking and having feelings about a traumatic event, and to avoid any reminders of the event, including places and people connected to what happened. The problem with avoidance and withdrawal is that emotions can become restricted, even numb to protect against distress. Feelings of detachment from others may lead to social withdrawal and there may be a loss of interest in usually pleasurable activities.

3. *Physical arousal reactions* are physical changes that make the body react as if danger is still present. These reactions include constantly being "on the lookout" for danger, being jumpy or easily startled, being irritable or having outbursts of anger, having difficulty falling or staying asleep, and having difficulty concentrating or paying attention.

Trauma Reminders can be sights, sounds, places, smells, specific people, a time of day, situations or even feelings, like being afraid or anxious. Trauma reminders can evoke upsetting thoughts and feelings about what happened during a traumatic event. Examples might include the sound of helicopters, screaming or shouting and specific people who were present at the time. Reminders are related to a specific type of difficult event, such as an earthquake, tornado, fire, assault or act of war. Over time, avoidance of reminders can make it hard for an individual to do normal activities.

Loss Reminders can also be sights, sounds, places, smells, specific people, the time of day, situations or feelings. Examples include seeing a picture of a lost loved one, or seeing their belongings, like their clothes. Loss reminders bring to mind the absence of a loved one. Missing the deceased can bring up strong feelings, like sadness, feeling nervous, feeling uncertain about what life will be without them, feeling angry, feeling alone or abandoned, or feeling hopeless. Loss reminders can also lead to avoiding things that people want to do or need to do.

Change Reminders can be people, places, things, activities or hardships that remind us of how our lives have changed from what they used to be as the result of a difficult event. This can be something as simple as waking up in a different bed in the morning, going to a different school or being in a different place. Even nice things can remind us of how life has changed, and make us miss what we had before.

Other kinds of reactions to very difficult events include grief reactions, depression, anxiety, guilt/shame and

physical reactions.

Grief Reactions are prevalent among those who survive difficult events and have lost someone they care about. Loss may lead to feelings of sadness and anger, guilt or regret over the death, missing or longing for the deceased, and dreams of seeing the person again. Sometimes people stay focused on the circumstances of a death, including being preoccupied with how the death could have been prevented, what the last moments were like and who was at fault. These reactions can interfere with grieving, making it more difficult for the individual to adjust to the death over time.

Depression is associated with prolonged grief reactions and strongly related to exposure to stressful events. Depressive reactions can include persistent depressed or irritable mood, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance, greatly diminished interest or pleasure in life activities, fatigue or loss of energy, feelings of worthlessness or guilt, feelings of hopelessness, and sometimes thoughts about suicide. Demoralization is a common response to unfulfilled expectations about improvement in secondary adversities and resignation to adverse changes in life circumstances.

Anxiety and fear are common reactions after difficult events. Anxiety can present in the form of excessive worry, physical tension, panic and fear. Anxiety reactions can also overlap with other problems including poor concentration, irritability and impaired sleep.

Guilt/Shame Some people have a lot of guilt and shame after difficult events. Such feelings may be very painful, difficult and challenging and people may be ashamed to disclose these feelings. Attributing excessive blame to oneself is not helpful and may add further distress.

Physical Reactions may be experienced after difficult events, even in the absence of an underlying physical injury or medical illness. Common physical reactions include:

- Headaches or dizziness
- Stomach aches, having sharp pain in your stomach
- Pains or tightness in your chest
- Feeling low in energy or slowed down
- Hot flashes or cold tingles (suddenly feeling hot or cold for no reason)
- Difficulty swallowing, feeling a strange lump in your throat
- Feeling weak in parts of your body
- Nausea or upset stomach (throwing up or feeling like you might, having butterflies in your stomach)
- Bowel or bladder problems (constipation, diarrhea, excess gas, bedwetting)

- Your heart beating too fast (even when you're not exercising)
- Trouble catching your breath (when you're not exercising)
- Pains in your body that don't have a known medical cause (sore joints or muscles)
- Numbness or tingling in parts of your body
- Feeling like your arms or legs are very heavy and hard to move
- A sense that it is hard to get going in the morning

Physical reactions may be due to the stress and strains of experiencing difficult events and can be another indicator of the amount of stress a person is experiencing.

Such reactions are understandable and not unusual. However, some individuals may view their reactions in negative ways (for example, my reactions mean, "There's something wrong with me" or "I'm weak"). After difficult events, stress reactions may continue for a while, but generally diminish. If these reactions continue to interfere with a person's ability to function adequately for over a month, psychological services should be considered. Be aware that many people also see positive reactions, including appreciating life, family and friends, or strengthening of spiritual beliefs and social connections.

Secondary adversities are other events that happen after the primary difficult event. Examples of secondary adversities include financial problems, legal problems, unexpected loss or change in living conditions, or health problems. Secondary adversities can prolong stress and grief reactions, raise spiritual questions (like, "Why is this happening to me?"), and increase the risk for depression, demoralization, and hopelessness. Secondary adversities can greatly interfere with functioning at work, in the family, in romantic and interpersonal relationships, and in the community.

Basic Coping

In general, difficult events may overwhelm an individual's ability to cope, putting him/her at risk for losing a sense of competence to handle problems. Feeling that one can cope is important for working through and transcending the difficult event. Often, just hearing about some basic coping mechanisms that have been helpful to others can jump-start one's motivation, creativity and natural resilience.

There are a variety of ways to cope with difficult events, reactions to those events and secondary adversities. We will mention some good and bad coping actions.

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handout: *Common Reactions when Dealing with Difficult Events*

Learning Objectives

- To understand basic coping options/skills and make goal-oriented choices about coping
- To identify and acknowledge your personal coping strengths
- To think through the negative consequences of bad coping actions
- To enhance your sense of personal control over coping
- To know how to help your buddy, family, or others with coping options/skills

Good coping actions are those actions that help to reduce anxiety, lessen distressing reactions, improve the situation or help people get through bad times. In general, coping methods that are likely to be helpful include:

- Talking to another person for support
- Getting needed information
- Getting adequate rest, nutrition, exercise
- Engaging in positive distracting activities (sports, hobbies, reading)
- Maintaining a normal schedule to the extent possible
- Telling yourself that it is natural to be upset for some period of time
- Scheduling pleasant activities
- Eating healthy meals
- Taking breaks
- Spending time with others
- Participating in a support group
- Using calming self-talk
- Using relaxation techniques
- Exercising in moderation
- Seeking counseling
- Keeping a journal
- Focusing on something practical that you can do right now to manage the situation better
- Using coping methods that have been successful in the past

Bad coping actions are those actions that tend to be ineffective in addressing problems or cause more problems than they solve. Such actions include:

- Using alcohol or drugs to cope
- Withdrawing from activities
- Withdrawing from family or friends
- Working too many hours
- Getting violently angry
- Excessive blaming of self or others

- Overeating or under-eating
- Spending too much time watching TV or movies, surfing the web, or playing video games
- Doing risky or dangerous things
- Not taking care of oneself (sleep, diet, exercise, etc.)

Now let's talk about some specific problem areas and ways to cope with them.

Coping Within the Family

Establishing family routines after a deployment is important for family recovery. It is especially important to restore and maintain family routines such as meal times, bedtime, wake time, reading time, play time, and to set aside time for the family to enjoy other activities together.

During deployment, your family members may have had to adapt to new challenges and hardships. They may have developed new daily routines and ways of coping. Returning home to different routines and means of handling problems can be difficult to deal with and can lead to family members not feeling appreciated or understood, not supporting each other, or getting into arguments. It is helpful for family members to develop a mutual understanding of their different experiences during the time of deployment and to develop a family plan for talking about these differences. Be understanding, patient and tolerant of differences in ways your family has learned to cope with challenges during your deployment. Talk about things that are bothering each family member, so you will know when and how to support them. Family members can help each other in a number of ways like listening, comforting with a hug, doing something thoughtful like writing a note, or getting a family member's mind off troubling thoughts by playing a game, etc.

Family Milestones, Goals and Being Deployed

While downrange, you may have missed important milestones such as:

- Birthdays
- Graduations
- The birth of a child
- A child learning to walk
- Having a child leave home
- The death of a loved one
- Other important events

Were there any special events that you missed? Were there any goals that you were working towards that were

interrupted by deployment, such as buying a new house or getting married?

Sometimes we measure our progress in life by these milestones and missing them can feel like a great loss. It can help to find alternative ways to handle the missed event or interruption in goals. You might consider:

- Honoring the event now that you are home (e.g., having a birthday party, celebrating anniversaries, visiting the gravesite of a relative who has died)
- Postpone the event to a later date (e.g., buying a house or getting married at a later date)
- Change your expectations, decide that you can tolerate the loss or postponement
- Not being too hard on yourself. You might change negative thoughts about missing the event to thoughts like: “I didn’t want to miss the event and I would have been there if I had been able, but I was called away to do important work for my nation.” Such thoughts may lessen your feelings of guilt.

Other Common Concerns

Anger Management

After difficult events, feelings of anger and frustration and irritability are common. Some anger is normal and may even be helpful. However, too much anger can increase interpersonal conflict, push others away or potentially lead to violence

Some questions you might consider are:

- How is anger affecting your life?
- How is anger affecting your relationship with family members and friends, or your ability to parent?
- How might holding on to anger help or hurt you versus coping with it, letting it go, or directing it toward positive activities?
- What changes would you like to make to address your anger?

Some anger management skills that you can apply:

- Take a “time out” or “cool down” (walk away, calm down and do something else for a while).
- If you are a parent, have another family member or other adult temporarily supervise your child while you are feeling particularly angry or irritable.
- Blow off steam through physical exercise (go for a walk, jog, do pushups).
- Distract yourself with positive activities like reading a book, praying or meditating, listening to upbeat music, going to religious services or other uplifting group activities, helping a buddy or someone else in need.
- Remind yourself that being angry will not help you achieve what you want, and may harm important

relationships.

- Talk to a buddy about what is angering you.
- Keep a journal in which you describe how you feel and what you can do to change the situation.
- Look at your situation in a different way, try to see your problems from another's viewpoint, or find reasons that your anger may be excessive.

Highly Negative Emotions (Guilt and Shame)

Let's talk a little bit more about guilt and shame. Some people feel guilty after a difficult event either because of things that they did or did not do during the event or because they feel that they may have caused or contributed to the event. Some events are out of our control; they are beyond our ability to prevent or stop them from happening. Even if you believe you were at fault that does not make it true. Dwelling on actions taken or not taken during the event is not productive. If there is something to be learned from the event, (e.g., "If that ever happens again, I am going to do X or not do X") then accept what you have learned, forgive yourself, and let go of the guilt. You can't go back and change the past.

You might also consider:

- How you could look at the situation differently? What is another way of thinking about it?
- How might you respond if a good friend was talking to himself/herself like this? What would you say to him/her? Can you say the same things to yourself?

Sleep Problems

Sleep difficulties are common following difficult events such as return from deployment. Some people tend to stay on alert at night, making it hard to fall asleep and causing frequent awakenings during the night. Worries about adversities and life changes can also make it hard to fall asleep. Disturbance in sleep can have a major effect on mood, concentration, decision-making and risk for an accident and injury. Have your sleep routines and sleep-related habits changed? Are you having any trouble sleeping?

Good habits for sleep include:

- Spend time working through bothersome problems during the day so that you don't feel the need to work on them at night
- Talk to buddies or others about immediate concerns. Get support!
- Increase regular exercise, although not too close to bedtime
- Limit daytime naps to 15 minutes and don't nap later than 4 p.m.
- Eliminate consumption of caffeinated beverages in the afternoon and evening

- Reduce alcohol consumption --- alcohol disrupts sleep
- Relax before bedtime by doing something calming, like listening to soothing music, meditating, or praying
- Go to sleep at the same time and get up at the same time each day

Alcohol and Substance Use

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handout: *Alcohol, Medication and Drug Use After Difficult Events*

Exposure to difficult events, ongoing stress and other adversities can lead to increased alcohol or drug use, relapse of past substance abuse, or a new onset of substance abuse. This can be dangerous and lead to self-destructive behavior (e.g., drunk driving), and can set up a pattern of abusing substances that can have long-term negative consequences. If you are having trouble with alcohol or drugs, seek help.

If you use alcohol or other substances, some things you might want to consider include:

- Are you self-medicating with alcohol or other substances to reduce bad feelings?
- What do you see as the positives and negatives of using substances to cope?
- What difficulties would you have in changing your substance use behavior?
- Do you feel confident that you can make and keep a commitment to yourself to either use alcohol or other substances safely or not at all?

Safety

Learning Objectives

- To understand important aspects of feeling and being safe

Safety is one of the components of PFA. Safety is not a new idea for you, it was emphasized in the Battlemind training that you received. In Battlemind you were cautioned to beware of driving in an unsafe manner, weapons safety for those who have weapons at home, and the need to watch out for the angry feelings that you may have had downrange, but that are not appropriate back here.

We are going to talk about safety in ways that are more general --- how safety can affect many areas of your life today. Then we will talk about some practical things you can do to (1) make a judgment about your safety and the safety of others, and (2) how you might deal with safety issues when you recognize them in yourself or in

someone else.

Let's start by hearing what you think about safety:

- What is the feeling of safety? [ask for response]
- How does it affect our daily lives? [ask for response]
- What can we do or not do to improve our safety? [ask for response]

When we perceive a situation as being a threat to our health or well-being, our bodies naturally react with a stress response that has been called the Fight or Flight Response. This response involves the release of stress hormones, which produce changes in our bodies that prepare it to fight off an enemy or flee from danger.

When the fight or flight response is activated you might feel more alert, on the lookout for danger, prepared for action, with muscles tensed and heart and breathing accelerated. All these responses may be very good if you have to jump out of the way of a moving vehicle or fight off an attacker. However, they are not so helpful and can be counter-productive if there is minimal or no actual threat to your health or well-being. Long-term activation of the fight or flight response can contribute to a host of health problems, such as high blood pressure.

Usually people walk around with some belief in their sense of safety, some sense that their world will not come crashing down on them. This has been called the “bubble of safety” or “shield of confidence.” However, very difficult events, such as a threat to life or limb, can alter our sense of safety - burst our bubble of safety or lower our shield of confidence. In these situations, it may take some time before a sense of safety can be restored.

Being safe and feeling safe is not the same thing. Without both of these, we may not be able to perform at our best. For example, one could stand on the curb of a street and think they are safe, and yet, they might be hit by a vehicle that is driving too close to the curb. On the other hand, one could stand on the side of the curb and think they are in danger of being hit, when in fact they are not. The perceptions of being in a threatening situation - that is our thoughts and beliefs of safety - sometimes match reality and sometimes they do not.

Feeling safe is important. The psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed that everyone is motivated by a common hierarchy of needs. These needs range from lower level basic needs such as food, drink, shelter and sleep to higher-level needs such as knowledge, personal growth, and self-fulfillment. The important idea behind this model is that one cannot attain the higher-level needs without first attaining the ones below it. For example, one must have food, drink, shelter, and sleep before we can work on higher-level needs such as personal growth and achievement. We see in the pyramid that safety is next to the bottom, just above the basic life needs. We must have a sense of being safe before we can work on our higher-level aspirations.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Increasing Your Sense of Safety

Downrange the threats you faced may have been of great risk to the things you value, like your life. Reactions of fear, worry, anxiety and the physical responses that accompany such threats are not unusual. There is good reason for our reactions to threat --- our reactions may keep us alive. If the threat of danger is ongoing, these reactions will continue to persist. However, now that you are back in the States, the threats you face may be different, fewer, or at least less likely to be lethal. It may take some time for your body to adjust to responses that are appropriate to the challenges that you now face.

We have already talked about the use of alcohol and other substances as a bad way of coping with stress. Substance use also puts your safety at risk through reduction of defenses and good sense, reduction of reaction time, increasing your risk for falls or injury, reckless driving, and many health and relationship problems.

There may be specific triggers, reminders of difficult events that cause you to feel unsafe. These might include reminders of things experienced during deployment. For example, noises, crowds, bridges, and reminders of remains including odors.

There are ways to increase your sense of safety. The first is to be connected with [know] your feelings/emotions and your specific triggers, and use threat reappraisal. Threat reappraisal is reevaluating your actual risk of harm

and responding appropriately. If you recognize that you are not feeling safe, ask yourself, “Am I really in danger?” This will help you decide what action to take to improve your sense of safety. In some cases, it may be enough just to recognize that you are not really in danger.

Another strategy to improve safety is to remove whatever is preventing you from feeling safe from your environment or remove yourself from the environment where you feel unsafe. This strategy must be done within reason. It is not in your best interest to avoid all places and situations where you feel threatened, but are actually safe. For example, because of your experiences while deployed, you may feel unsafe in crowds or on bridges. Back in the States, crowds and bridges do not carry the same risks for harm as in the deployed environment. Avoiding crowds and bridges altogether will not help you regain your sense of safety.

Increasing social contact and support also helps. This may include talking with others about when and why you feel unsafe and getting their feedback. Calming techniques will also help you relax and feel more comfortable. We will be talking more in detail about increasing social support and calming techniques in our next workshop.

Buddy Care - Helping Your Buddy be Safe

Promoting safety can reduce distress and worry for your buddies. Safety can be supported in a number of ways, including helping your buddy:

- Get current accurate and up-to-date information
- Get connected with available practical resources
- Get connected with others who have shared similar experiences
- Do things that are active, practical, and familiar
- Avoid exposure to information that is inaccurate or excessively upsetting. This may include helping or reminding your buddy to limit exposure to TV, movies, radio, sights, sounds, or smells that can be upsetting. It might also mean not talking about traumatic events or reminders of the difficult event.

You can also help your buddy reevaluate perceptions of threat by discussing the situation. This may involve

- Challenging the perception of threat, such as “This situation is not the same as the one that you faced in the past.”
- Emphasizing the positive ways in which your buddy faced and overcame a previous threat.
- Acknowledge your buddy’s reaction and express your understanding and interest in helping. This will go a long way in making your buddy feel accepted and cared for.

You may also help your buddy, family members or others with calming. This will be discussed in the next workshop.

We recommend that whatever you hear in this discussion remain in this group. Please do not discuss others' concerns outside of this group.

Conclusion/Close

----- End of Workshop 1 -----

WORKSHOP 2

Outline

- A. Calming
 - Breathing
 - Muscle Relaxation
 - Other Relaxation Techniques
 - Buddy Care—Calming
- B. Connecting
 - Different Types of Support
 - Five Steps to Getting Support
 - Buddy Care—Support
- C. Barriers to Care

Introduction

Welcome back to our second workshop on Psychological First Aid. Before we get into today's training, we want to remind you that we have a website (XX), a toll-free telephone information line (XX), and email service (XX).

Just to remind you, this educational program is based on the concept of Psychological First Aid (PFA), a set of recommended principles developed by the National Center for PTSD, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and others for assisting people after disasters and other traumatic events. We have adapted the PFA principles to make them applicable to Soldiers and their spouses. OK, let's begin:

Calming

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handout: *Calming Techniques*

It's very common for people who have experienced a difficult event to feel tense, anxious, overwhelmed with emotions and unable to stop thinking about or imagining what happened. These are normal and expected responses to difficult events.

In the presence of danger, the body becomes alert, aroused and ready to deal with the threat. In a sense, the body becomes anxious. In the absence of real danger, the anxiety is unnecessary, and may have negative consequences for one's health. For example, it can cause headaches, appetite disturbance, problems with pain, sleep disturbance, and high blood pressure. The arousal and anxiety can also predispose one to social problems like violence and alcohol abuse. Extremely high arousal, numbing, or extreme anxiety can interfere with sleep,

eating, decision-making, parenting, work, and other life tasks. Calming is a skill that can be used whenever heightened arousal, tension, and anxiety occurs and is especially important when reactions are so intense and persistent that they interfere with the ability to function.

We are going to teach you some specific skills that can help you minimize the negative effects of arousal, tension and anxiety. Think of these skills as you would any other skill (like riding a bike). They will take time to master, but once you learn them, they become quite easy to apply. It will take time to learn to use them effectively and it is important to practice these skills on a regular basis, particularly right after you learn them.

Learning Objectives

- To learn techniques to calm yourself when highly aroused, tense, anxious or emotionally overwhelmed
- To learn how to help your buddy become calm

Before we start talking about the calming techniques, I am wondering, have you ever learned any relaxation techniques before?

If yes, what have you learned and has it helped? (*Engage in brief discussion.*) OK, I am still going to teach you this skill.

If no, okay, then this will be something new for you. I hope that you will find these new techniques useful.

We are going to teach you a breathing technique, a muscle relaxation technique, and a cognitive technique. We will start with the breathing technique.

Breathing Technique

First, let's talk about why breathing can help and how to retrain your breathing to a style that can reduce physical tension and anxious feelings. When we get aroused, tense and anxious, our body responds by changing the way we breathe. We tend to breathe faster and shallower. This is an important point because breathing helps us regulate different gases in our body that are necessary for healthy functioning. There is always a balance between the level of oxygen and carbon dioxide in our body. When we get aroused and anxious, our breathing changes in such a way that the balance is upset. When the balance is upset, it causes us to feel even more of the physical reactions of arousal and anxiety. Thus, the way we breathe when we get upset can be extremely important in managing our arousal, tension, and anxiety and preventing it from getting worse. We are going to teach you how to retrain your breathing so you can begin using the breathing technique right away.

Most of us realize that our breathing affects the way we feel. For example, many people believe that taking a deep breath helps them calm down when they are stressed or anxious. However, contrary to this popular belief, taking a deep breath usually is not helpful and can actually lead to even more feelings of anxiety. A good way to cope with anxiety is to take a normal breath and exhale slowly. While you exhale, try saying the word CALM or RELAX very slowly to yourself, like this, C-a-a-a-a-l-m. If you don't find the words "calm" or "relax" to be helpful, it is also fine to use the word "exhale" or some other word of your choosing.

In addition to exhaling slowly while saying "calm" to yourself, I want you to slow down your breathing. Very often, when people become frightened or upset, they feel like they need more air and may hyperventilate in response to that feeling. Hyperventilation, which simply refers to breathing in excess oxygen, does not have a calming effect. Hyperventilating tells our bodies to prepare for danger and causes feelings of anxiety. Unfortunately, when we are under stress, many of us hyperventilate without even realizing it. Unless we are preparing for a very dangerous situation, we often don't need as much air as we are taking in. If we want to calm down, what we really need to do is to slow down our breathing and take in less air.

*******Provider note:** Model how to inhale: exhale slowly, say "CALM," pause, count to four, and repeat. Then ask the Soldier to perform the exercise according to the following instructions.

Let's practice: Focus on your breathing. Take a normal breath and exhale very slowly while silently repeating the cue word. Pause and count to four before taking the next breath. Repeat the entire sequence 10 to 15 times. How did that go for you? Did you have any problems?

There is a slight variation to this technique where you say calming phrases rather than just saying one word. Try this: inhale slowly through your nose (one-thousand one; one-thousand two; one-thousand three), and comfortably fill your lungs all the way down to your belly. Silently and gently, say to yourself, "My body is filling with calmness." Exhale slowly through your mouth (one-thousand one; one-thousand two; one-thousand three), and comfortably empty your lungs all the way down to your abdomen. As you exhale, silently and gently say to yourself, "My body is releasing tension." Repeat the entire sequence 10 to 15 times.

The breathing technique will be helpful for you whenever you feel:

- Tense, irritable, anxious, frustrated or annoyed
- Shaky, trembling or feeling "keyed up"
- Out of control or have the urge to escape your current situation
- Find it hard to relax
- Not sleeping or have poor sleep
- Have difficulty concentrating

In addition, it will help in specific times and situations like:

- In times of high stress (e.g., traffic)
- When encountering reminders of difficult events
- When emotionally upset (e.g., after arguments with a spouse or family member)

If you practice the breathing technique on a regular basis, regardless of whether you feel tense or anxious, you will be better able to use this skill when you really need it. Once you have some experience with the breathing technique, you can practice and use it just about anywhere (e.g., while driving, in a meeting).

Muscle Relaxation Technique

In addition to changing our breathing patterns, we often react to stress by "tensing up" our muscles. When this response is maintained, waste products build up in the muscle, causing muscle pain. This can lead to headaches, increase in back pain, and other physical complaints. We can counteract the negative effects of tension by learning to identify when our muscles are tense and subsequently letting them relax. The following exercise will help you to recognize when you are holding tension in your muscles and help you to get rid of that tension. This technique was adapted from Davis, Eshelman, and McKay's 1995 *Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook, Fourth Edition*. This book is a great resource for stress reduction techniques and newer editions are available.

Okay, let's try this technique. Get in a comfortable position and relax. Now clench your right fist, tighter and tighter, studying the tension as you do so. Keep it clenched and notice the tension in your first, hand, and forearm. Now relax. Feel the looseness in your right hand, and notice the contrast with the tension. Repeat this procedure with your right fist again, always noticing as you relax that this is the opposite of tension- relax and feel the difference. Repeat the entire procedure with your left fist, then both fists at once. Now bend your elbows and tense your biceps. Tense them as hard as you can and observe the feeling of tautness. Relax and straighten out your arms. Let the relaxation develop and feel that difference. Repeat this and all succeeding procedures at least once.

Turning attention to your head, wrinkle your forehead as tight as you can. Now relax and smooth it out. Let yourself imagine your entire forehead and scalp becoming smooth and at rest. Now frown and notice the strain spreading throughout your forehead. Let go. Allow your brow to become smooth again. Close your eyes now, squint them tighter. Look for the tension. Relax your eyes. Let them remain closed gently and comfortably. Now clench your jaw, bite hard, notice the tension throughout your jaw. Relax your jaw. When the jaw is relaxed, your lips will be slightly parted. Let yourself really appreciate the contrast between tension and relaxation. Now press your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Feel the ache in the back of your mouth.

Relax. Press your lips now; purse them into an “O”. Relax your lips. Notice that your forehead, scalp, eyes, jaw, tongue and lips are all relaxed.

Press your head back as far as it can comfortably go and observe the tension in your neck. Roll it to the right and feel the changing locus of stress, roll it to the left. Straighten your head and bring it forward, press your chin against your chest. Feel the tension in your throat, the back of your neck. Relax, allowing your head to return to a comfortable position. Let the relaxation deepen. Now shrug your shoulders. Keep the tension as you hunch your head down between your shoulders. Relax your shoulders. Drop them back and feel the relaxation spreading through your neck, throat and shoulders, pure relaxation, deeper and deeper.

Give your entire body a chance to relax. Feel the comfort and the heaviness. Now breathe in and fill your lungs completely. Hold your breath. Notice the tension. Now exhale, let your chest become loose, let the air hiss out. Continue relaxing, letting your breath come freely and gently. Repeat this several times, noticing the tension draining from your body as you exhale. Next, tighten your stomach and hold. Not the tension, then relax. Now place your hand on your stomach. Breathe deeply into your stomach, pushing your hand up. Hold, and relax. Feel the contrast of relaxation as the air rushes out. Now arch your back, without straining. Keep the rest of your body as relaxed as possible. Focus on the tension in your lower back. Now relax, deeper and deeper. Tighten your buttocks and thighs. Flex your thighs by pressing down your heels as hard as you can. Relax and feel the difference. Now curl your toes downward, making your calves tense. Study the tension. Relax. Now bend your toes toward your face, creating tension in your shins. Relax again.

Feel the heaviness throughout your lower body as the relaxation deepens. Relax your feet, ankles, calves, shins, knees, thighs, and buttocks. Now let the relaxation spread to your stomach, lower back, and chest. Let go more and more. Experience the relaxation deepening in your shoulders, arms, and hands. Deeper and deeper. Notice the feeling of looseness and relaxation in your neck, jaws, and all your facial muscles.

Like the breathing technique, the more you practice the muscle relaxation technique the better you will get. For these techniques to be really useful, you should practice at least one of them on a daily basis.

Other Calming Techniques and Tips

Cognitive Techniques: The things we think and the images that we visualize in our heads contribute to our level of relaxation. If we think about troubling events or have troubling images in mind, we can become tense and upset. Similarly, if we think peaceful, pleasant thoughts and visualize pleasant images, it will help us to become calm. You can use this to your advantage by using positive images and thinking positive thoughts. For example, you can imagine being in a very comfortable, safe, and pleasant place. Each person has his or her own idea of

what a comfortable, safe, and pleasant place might be. For some, imagining being at a beach, a forest, or at home in a recliner might be best. For others, a comfortable, safe, and pleasant place might be in the company of friends or family. Whatever place you prefer, when you use your imagination to picture yourself in that situation your body will begin to react as if it were there. The more senses you involve, the more realistic it will seem and the more your body will respond to the imagined environment. For example, you might imagine being in a hammock in your backyard, and seeing the blue sky, feeling the comfortable air and warm sunshine on your skin, and smelling the scent of flowers or pine trees. You can use thoughts or short phrases to augment the imagery. For example, saying:

- I am calm, alert and at peace
- My body is relaxed and calm
- I am relaxed, refreshed and alive
- My arms and legs are warm, heavy and comfortable

You can imagine a place where you have been or make-up a place from scratch. Either way, by using your imagination you are the master and you can include the images and thoughts that you find calming.

There are many tools/techniques to help you calm. Some other helpful calming techniques include meditations, peaceful music, yoga, and exercise. Other considerations include:

- Eliminate behaviors that produce negative emotions (e.g., limit exposure to troubling events and reminders of troubling events such as upsetting TV or movies)
- Increase activities that promote positive emotions including joy, humor, personal interest, contentment, and love
- If you have troubling thoughts and feeling due to a specific difficult event, remind yourself that the thoughts and feelings you have are not dangerous in the way the event may have been

Things that are not helpful for calming include:

- Criticizing yourself for the way you reacted to difficult events
- Overindulging in caffeine and foods with high sugar content
- Self-medication with alcohol or drugs
 - Alcohol and drugs disrupt normal sleep patterns resulting in poor sleep
 - They are an avoidance of stressors rather than a working through of stressors
 - Alcohol and drug use can lead to other serious health problems

Buddy Care - Helping Your Buddy with Calming

Learning Objectives

- To learn how to help a buddy, family member become calm

When a buddy is tense, anxious or emotionally overwhelmed you might notice that they are:

- Angry, irritable or bad tempered
- Less responsive to verbal questions or commands
- Engaging in aimless disorganized behavior
- Easily startled or jumpy
- Experiencing physical reactions such as shaking or trembling
- Looking distracted, worried or in extreme cases glassy eyed or vacant
- Having difficulty concentrating or processing information
- Exhibiting strong emotional responses, crying, or hyperventilating
- Engaging in risky activities
 - Driving aggressively
 - Smoking or drinking more than usual
 - Spending a lot of money

In general, the following steps will help to calm most distressed individuals:

- When you notice a buddy having a problem, respect his/her privacy, and give him/her a few minutes before you intervene. Say you will be available if they need you or that you will check back with them in a few minutes to see how they are doing and ask if there is anything you can do to help at that time.
- Remain calm, quiet, and present, rather than trying to talk directly to the person, as this may contribute to cognitive/emotional overload. Remain available, while giving him/her a few minutes to calm down.
- Stand by and be available should the person need or wish to receive further help.
- Offer support and help him/her focus on specific manageable feelings, thoughts, and goals.
- Give information that orients him/her to the surroundings, such as what will be happening, and what actions he/she may consider.

Use these points to help buddies understand their reactions:

- Shocking experiences may trigger strong and upsetting, self-protective “alarm” reactions in the body --- these are normal reactions
- Intense emotions may come and go like waves
- Sometimes the best way to recover is to take a few moments for calming routines (for example, go for a walk or practice breathing or muscle relaxation techniques)
- Remind them of the value of connecting --- friends and family are very important sources of support to help one calm down

If your buddy is too upset, agitated, withdrawn or disoriented to talk, is experiencing ongoing intense crying, or shows extreme anxiety, fear, or panic, consider the following:

- Take your buddy to a quiet place to talk
- Ask your buddy to listen to you and look at you
- Find out if he/she knows where he/she is and what is happening
- Ask him/her to describe the surroundings, and say where both of you are
- Enlist other buddies, family or friends in providing comfort to the distressed individual
- Understand what your buddy is experiencing. Is he/she crying, panicking, experiencing a “flashback,” or imagining that a difficult event is taking place again? Address the person’s primary immediate concern or difficulty, rather than simply trying to convince the person to “calm down” or to “feel safe” (neither of which tends to be effective)

If none of these actions seems to help in stabilizing an agitated buddy, a technique called “grounding” may be helpful. You can introduce grounding by saying:

“When feeling emotionally overwhelmed, unable to stop thinking about a difficult event or disoriented, you can use a method called ‘grounding.’ Grounding works by turning your attention from your thoughts back to the outside world. Here’s what you do....”

- Sit in a comfortable position with your legs and arms uncrossed.
- Breathe in and out slowly.
- Look around you and name five non-distressing objects that you can see. For example you could say, “I see the floor, I see a shoe, I see a table, I see a chair, I see a person.”
- Breathe in and out slowly.
- Next, name five non-distressing sounds you can hear. For example you could say, “I hear a woman talking, I hear myself breathing, I hear a door close, I hear someone typing, I hear a cell phone ringing.”
- Breathe in and out slowly.
- Next, name five non-distressing things you can feel. For example, you could say, “I can feel this wooden armrest with my hands, I can feel my toes inside my shoes, I can feel my back pressing against my chair, I can feel the blanket in my hands, I can feel my lips pressed together.”
- Breathe in and out slowly.

If none of these approaches aids in calming, get help from a doctor or mental health professional.

Connecting

Connecting with others includes *seeking support* and *giving supports to others*. Social support is one of the most consistently identified protective factors for combating stress. After difficult events, a lack of connection with social support may lead to loneliness and emotional distance, which can increase the risk for problems such as PTSD.

Learning Objectives

- To learn basic skills to establish, improve or sustain contacts with primary support persons and community helping resources

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handouts:

- *Connecting with Others: Giving Social Support*

Optional Activity

- Play a video clip that illustrates the concept of giving and receiving support. There are two possible clips from the movie Up. In the first, Russell, a scout, knocks on the door of the older gentleman and offers to help him. Russell is persistent but the older gentleman declines help. In the second clip, the older gentleman sustains an injury to his finger. Russell tries very hard to help and the older gentleman is willing to let him help, but things don't go as expected. Was help offered? Was help accepted? Was the help offered what the individual needed? Why might some people who need help not want it?

Social support allows people to:

- Increase opportunities for knowledge and problem solving
- Share experiences and concerns
- Feel needed and wanted
- Feel understood and cared for
- Feel like one fits in and belong
- Feel reassured that friends and family will be there for you if needed
- Build up confidence that you can handle the problems you are facing
- Get good advice when confronted with a difficult situation

There are times when seeking the help of others is vital. For example:

- An acute medical problem that needs immediate attention
- An acute mental health problem (e.g., someone threatening harm to self or others)
- Domestic, child, or elder abuse
- Significant developmental concerns about children or adolescents
- When pastoral counseling is desired

- Alcohol or drug problems
- Ongoing problems with difficult events (e.g., still having problems 4+ weeks after event)

Different Types of Support

There is a variety of different kinds of support including:

- **Emotional Support:** hugs, a listening ear, understanding, love, acceptance
- **Social Connection:** feeling like you fit in and have things in common with other people, having people to do things with
- **Feeling Needed:** feeling that you are important to others, that you are valued, useful and productive, and that people appreciate you
- **Reassurance of Self-Worth:** having people help you have confidence in yourself and your abilities, that you can handle the challenges you face
- **Reliable Support:** having people reassure you that they will be there for you in case you need them, that you have people you can rely on to help you
- **Advice and Information:** having people show you how to do something or give you information or good advice, having people help you understand that your way of reacting to what has happened is normal, having good examples to learn from about how to cope in positive ways with what is happening
- **Physical Assistance:** having people help you do things, like carrying things, fixing up your house or room, and helping you do paperwork
- **Material Assistance:** having people give you things, like food, clothing, shelter, medicine, building materials or money

Some problems require specific kinds of support. For example, one type of support, like financial advice, can be very helpful in dealing with financial problems, but not helpful in dealing with other problems (like relationship problems). It is best when there is a good match between what the problem demands from the person and what the support provides.

Establishing a Support Network

There are many sources of support including those with whom you have a primary relationship (e.g., spouse/significant other, children, parents, other family members, close friends, neighbors, and clergy) and those outside the primary relationship such as co-workers and hobby or club members (e.g., VFW, Rotary, or book club). Spiritual beliefs and religious practices can be a way to attain support from your higher power, clergy and fellow church members.

Buddy support provides a framework within which Soldiers can give and receive help and assistance from each other. Buddy support allows Soldiers to share experiences, identify daily personal and interpersonal challenges, gain supportive assistance and become empowered. In providing support to a buddy and engaging the assistance of a buddy, some Soldiers may benefit from strengthening their social skills. Here are some tips for expanding friendships your network of buddy support.

1. Recognize that you are not the only who is nervous about establishing new friends or buddies. Others may be even more nervous about approaching you. Go to places and participate in programs, activities, and groups where you can meet people. Listen to the interest of others. You may have a similar interest that may strengthen a bond of friendship. Be sensitive and respect the privacy of others.
2. Look friendly and approachable. Smile, make eye contact, listen to others and meet them where they are relative to their interest in developing friends or buddy contacts.
3. Learn how to initiate conversation (assignments, commanders, cars, sports, hobbies, etc). Be a good conversationalist. Listen to what others have to say about themselves. Avoid monopolizing the conversation. Be an attentive listener.
4. Accept people as they are. Try not to find fault. Look at the positive aspects of an individual or situation. Be sincere in everything you do. No one likes to be with someone who is not genuine.
5. Be generous with praise and slow with criticism. No one wants to be criticized by someone they hardly know.
6. Be helpful. If you understand something better than someone in a class or on a project, volunteer to help him/her. Volunteer to tutor others.
7. Try to be available if someone needs to talk or asks your opinion about a particular situation. Be careful about offering advice unless you are specifically asked for it. Sometimes a sympathetic ear is all that is desired.
8. Keep communication channels open. Do not expect friendship and buddy networks to happen without some effort. It is a two-way street; call up people and keep in touch with them. If appropriate, follow-up with people you have just met.
9. Learn how to be a buddy to others. Show people that you are reliable and can be trusted. It will

encourage others to be your buddy. Sometimes, it is essential to take the first step in developing lasting friendship and buddy networks.

Five Steps to Getting Support

When you know that you need support (or think that it is probably a good idea), it is time to take action. But what do you do? Five steps will help you think through the types of support that would be helpful and figure out how to ask for the kind of support you need:

1. **"What Do I Want?"** The first step is to figure out what you really want or need. For example, sometimes we want to be understood, and sometimes you want advice. There are two parts to this:
 - A. **Look Outside Yourself:** What kind of problem am I facing that I may need support from others to cope with? For example:
 - Do I have to make an important decision (and therefore I need some good advice?)
 - Do I need someone to help me do something?
 - Do I need someone to give me something?
 - B. **Look Inside Yourself:** What am I thinking and feeling inside that I may need support from others to cope with?
 - Do I want someone to just listen and try to understand what I'm going through?
 - Do I want a hug from someone?
 - Do I want companionship?
 - Do I want encouragement that I can handle a difficult situation?
 - Do I want reassurance that people will be there for me?
 - Do I want someone to help me get my mind off my problems?
2. **"Whom Should I Ask?"** The second step is to think about who has been or could be a good source of support for what you want? You need to ask yourself:
 - Who has been a good source of this type of support in the past?
 - Do I have others that I can depend on to provide this type of support? For example, even if you have never gone to him/her to talk before, do you have an aunt or uncle whom you think would be a good listener?
 - Do I need to seek new supports to meet a need? For example, if I want someone to talk to, are there people I know, or people around me, whom I could start spending time with?

3. **Find the Right Time.** Because you'll be talking to the person about something that matters to you, you want him/her to have enough time to listen. Choose the right time and place to approach the person.
4. **Request With an "I"-Message.** Once you have decided what type of support you wish to receive, whom to ask, and have found a good time to talk, use an "I"-message to communicate the following:
 - How you're feeling
 - About your situation
 - What you want him/her to do

For example, you might say, 'I'm really angry about what happened at work today, and I just want to tell you about it.'

5. **Thank the Person.** End the conversation thanking the person for listening or how you were helped. Be specific so he/she knows how to help in the future.

Before we move on, does anyone have any questions about getting support? Okay, let's talk about giving support to others and words and phrases you can use to show your support.

Buddy Care - Supporting Your Buddy

Learning Objectives

- To understand the basic skills for supporting others
- To learn ways that you can model support

There are five basic steps to learning to provide support to others:

1. **Identify the type of problem the person is facing.** Be sensitive to the type of problem that he/she is facing. Is he/she feeling sad or discouraged? Does he/she need help doing something, like repair something that is broken? Does he/she need someone who can help clean something up or run an errand?
2. **Identify the type of support you can provide that would be helpful.** Think about the types of support that you can provide, or get others to provide, that would help the person. This may involve helping directly with the problem (like helping to carry something or to fix something), but it may also involve helping to get his/her mind off things, like going for a walk, seeing a movie, or doing something together. As you think this through, consider your limits as to how much help you can realistically

provide. Be careful not to overburden yourself by taking on too much. If the problem is a difficult one, and the person needing help agrees, invite other people to help.

3. **Find the right time.** Because you'll be talking to the person about something that matters to him/her, find a good time to talk when he/she can listen to you. For example, you can ask, "Do you have the time to talk right now?"
4. **Offer to help.** Once you have found a good time to talk, tell him/her that you care and you would like to help. Be careful not to make him/her feel uncomfortable by implying that he/she isn't handling things well.
5. **Provide help in a sensitive way.** Finally, if he/she agrees to receive support, provide it in a sensitive way. Pay attention to which types of help he/she wishes to receive, when he/she wants help, and how much help he/she wants. Be gracious---if he/she thanks you then say you are welcome.

Modeling Support

The way you respond to buddies who are seeking help can be important. Negative support such as minimizing problems or needs, providing unrealistic expectations, or invalidating messages can be undermining. You can help buddies by providing positive and supportive comments such as:

Reflective comments:

- “From what you're saying, I can see how you would be...”
- “It sounds like you're saying...”
- “It seems that you are...”

Clarifying comments:

- “Tell me if I’m wrong ... it sounds like you ...”
- “Am I right when I say that you ...”

Supportive comments:

- “No wonder you feel...”
- “It sounds really hard...”
- “It sounds like you’re being hard on yourself.
- “It is such a tough thing to go through something like this.”
- “I’m really sorry this is such a tough time for you.”

- “We can talk more tomorrow if you’d like.”

Empowering Comments and Questions:

- “What have you done in the past to make yourself better when things got difficult?”
- “Are there any things that you think would help you to feel better?”
- “I have an information sheet with some ideas about how to deal with difficult situations. Maybe there is an idea or two here that might be helpful for you.”
- “People can be very different in what helps them to feel better. When things get difficult, for me, it has helped me to... Do you think something like that would work for you?”

Barriers to Care

If individuals are reluctant to seek support, there may be many reasons, including:

- Not knowing what they need (and perhaps feeling that they should know)
- Feeling guilty about receiving help when others are in greater need
- Not knowing where to turn for help
- Fearing that they will get so upset that they will lose control
- Fearing the people they ask will be angry or make them feel guilty for needing help
- Worrying that they will be a burden to others
- Doubting that support will be helpful or not trusting mental health professionals
- Having tried to get help and finding that help wasn’t there (feeling let down or betrayed)
- Not being able to afford or access help

Some Soldiers are reluctant to seek needed help because they are concerned about:

- Feeling embarrassed or weak because of needing help
- Fearing unit leadership would treat them differently
- Concern that it would harm their career
- Feeling fellow Soldiers would have less confidence in them
- Believing that they would be blamed for the problem (rather than blaming difficult events)
- Thinking, “No one can understand what I’m going through”

You can be of assistance by helping a buddy in need to:

- Think about the type of support that would be most helpful
- Think about who they can approach for that type of support
- Choose the right time and place to approach the person
- Talk to the person and explain how he/she can be of help

- Encourage and support their decision to seek help

After difficult events, some people choose not to talk about their experiences. In these instances, the focus of support should not be on discussing the difficult event or loss, but rather on providing practical assistance and problem-solving current needs and concerns. Even if difficult events are not discussed or no talking takes place at all, spending time with people one feels close to can feel good.

We want to get some feedback about our last workshop. When we met last, we talked about basic coping skills, anger management, sleep problems and safety. Did you find this information useful? Did you do handle a problem differently based on what you learned in the last workshop?

Conclusion/Close

Well we are out of time so we'll end our discussion. Great participation today! You provided great examples of challenges and use of PFA to work through them. Don't hesitate to call our toll-free telephone information line (XX), visit the website (XX), or e-mail us directly (XX) for additional assistance.

----- End Workshop 2 -----

WORKSHOP 3

Outline

- A. Efficacy
- B. Problem Solving
 - Buddy Care—Problem Solving
- C. Positive Activity Scheduling
- D. Hope/Optimism
- E. Helpful Thinking
 - Buddy Care—Helpful Thinking example

Introduction

“Well here we all are one more time. You all have been through, and continue to go through, a lot. We hope we are increasingly on track with our suggestions. We will stay with our usual format here beginning with a brief review, introducing one, and then another of the principles of PFA in more detail.

This educational program is based on the concept of Psychological First Aid (PFA), a set of recommended principles developed by the National Center for PTSD, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and others for assisting people after disasters and other traumatic events. We have adapted the PFA principles to make them applicable to Soldiers and their spouses in dealing with adjustments associated with the return from deployment. Let’s begin by talking about self and collective efficacy.

Efficacy: Self and Collective Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s own capacity to achieve certain goals. An individual with high self-efficacy will believe that actions he or she takes towards a goal will result in success. Because of this positive belief, the individual will be more likely to make consistent and organized efforts in the direction of his/her goal.

Collective efficacy is the belief that group goals are attainable. You may be familiar with concepts of self- and collective efficacy from your training for carrying out missions --- you learned to have confidence in yourself, your leaders and the group as a whole.

Self-efficacy can be built by learning problem-solving skills, helpful and optimistic thinking, and through demonstrations of how individuals, families, and groups can work together to overcome adversity.

As we talk about various skills today, keep in mind that by learning these skills you are filling your personal toolbox with new tools that will be helpful when facing difficult events. Ultimately, learning these new skills

can strengthen your belief in your ability to handle problems and achieve goals --- in short, increase your self-efficacy.

We will now discuss problem-solving skills and then move on to talk about the skills of positive activity scheduling.

Problem Solving

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handout: *Problem-Solving*

Sometimes people experience times when it seems that there are so many problems that it is hard to figure out what to do. There is so much pressure to do something that it can be hard to step back and think carefully about what are the best things to do. It can therefore be helpful to use a systematic way of focusing on one problem at a time and carefully considering and choosing your actions. Today we are going to teach you a simple 3-step way to tackle any kind of problem that you want. Problem solving is a particularly useful tool because it can be used to think about reducing stress reactions, address interpersonal problems, and respond to practical obstacles to desired outcomes. If you use it, it can help you cut problems down to size and tackle your challenges successfully.

We are going to work through a model problem using the three steps, to give you an idea of how it works. We will come up with some possible things that can be done to work on the problem, and at the same time you'll be learning a tool that you can use for any other kind of problem that you're facing. Does that make sense? Any questions? Okay, what problem would you like to use as our model problem?

*******Provider note:** you should understand enough about the problem to decide if it is a good choice for problem solving.

OK, the three steps are, first, to define the problem; second, to come up with a list of possible solutions; and third, to decide which ones to use and then go try them.

1. Define the Problem - Defining the problem carefully is important because if the problem is described in a clear and concrete way, it will be easier to identify practical steps toward solution. Before you can solve a problem, you have to have a clear idea of what the problem is. The more specific you can be about what the problem is, the easier it will be come up with ideas that will help to solve it.

Often, what seems like a big problem can be broken down into smaller problems that are easier to solve. Be

specific when defining the problem. Most big problems can be broken down into smaller ones and these are much easier to solve. Also, the idea is to stay focused on one problem at a time. When problem solving, it is very easy to get into your other problems. Try not to do this. You can deal with another problem later in the same way.

So, how would you define our problem with _____?

*******Provider note:** Help the Soldiers define the problem in a way that is concrete and suggests ways to solve it.

It is important to write things down as you work through a problem. So, let's take a minute and write down our definition of the problem.

2. Make a List of Possible Solutions - Making a written list of possible responses/solutions is especially important. It will help you get off of "automatic pilot" and think about ideas that you might not ordinarily consider, and if you can make a list, it will help you see that you have more control than you might think, that you have some options for what you can do to make the situation a little better and cut the problem down to size. If you write your list down, you also won't lose your good ideas. The idea here is to "brainstorm" and list as many responses as possible. Often, first ideas about solutions are not the best, and having a list of possible actions can make the problem seem more solvable. The goal is to come up with ideas, and not worry about how effective they will be; so write down any idea you have, including ones that might seem silly. Try to come up with as many solutions as you can. Don't try to judge them yet. Be very specific.

So let's consider our problem with _____. What are some things you can do to help solve it? As we come up with ideas, we will write them down.

*******Provider note:** As solutions are generated, you can suggest additional ideas and assist with the shaping and modification of ideas.

Types of solutions that may be relevant include:

- Ways of changing the situation
- Taking action on parts of the problem that are controllable
- Solutions that extend or build on things that are already helping
- Learning new skills for difficult situations
- Ways of calming oneself
- Helpful things to say to oneself

- Getting help/support from other people
- Getting additional services (Knowing what services are available ahead of time will help with solution generation and ensure that use of relevant available services can be considered for inclusion in the list)

You should end this phase of problem solving when at least 10 ideas have been listed, when there are several practical and useful ideas on the list, and when you are "running dry" of ideas. What do you think of our list of possible solutions?

3. Choose Best Solutions - OK, the final step is to go back through your list of solutions and choose the BEST actions. You can get rid of any solutions that don't seem helpful and pick some solutions that seem reasonable, that you think might help, that you would be willing to do, and you would like to put into action. As you pick some good possible solutions, you will want to circle them on your written list.

Which actions look especially good to you? You may choose several actions depending on the problem. It is important that you take relatively small steps and not make an unrealistic commitment. You must be able to follow through with the actions and the items you choose should be ones that have some real impact on the problem, even if it is a small impact.

*******Provider instruction:** Engage in a discussion of the pros and cons of the various choices. Choose several of the best actions from the model problem.

That's how you do problem solving. Remember that this problem solving technique will work for all kinds of problems. It will help to practice the three-step technique for it to work, but also remember there are benefits to seeking help from others when you require assistance.

Buddy Care - Helping Buddies Solve Problems

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handout: *Helping Your Buddy Solve Problems*

You can help your buddy with problem solving. When buddies are facing adversity, providing them with needed resources can increase a sense of empowerment, hope, and restored dignity. Therefore, assisting your buddy with current or anticipated problems is very helpful. Fellow Soldiers may welcome a pragmatic focus and assistance with problem solving.

Learning Objectives

- To learn how to offer practical help through problem solving for buddies' immediate needs and concerns

As much as possible, help your buddy address identified needs, as problem-solving may be more difficult under conditions of stress and adversity. Teaching individuals to set achievable goals may reverse feelings of failure and inability to cope, help individuals to have repeated success experiences, and help to reestablish a sense of environmental control.

Step 1: Identify the Most Immediate Needs - If a buddy has identified several needs or current concerns, it will be necessary to focus on them one at a time. For some needs, there will be immediate solutions (for example, getting something to eat). Others (for example, returning to previous routines after deployment or acquiring needed health care) will not be solved quickly, but your buddy may be able to take concrete steps to address the problem (for example, setting an appointment for health care services). As you work with your buddy, help him/her select issues requiring immediate help.

Step 2: Clarify the Need - Specify the problem. If the problem is understood and clarified, it will be easier to identify practical steps that can be taken to address it.

Step 3: Discuss an Action Plan - Discuss what can be done to address your buddy's need or concern. Your buddy may say what he/she would like to be done, or you can offer a suggestion. If you know what services are available ahead of time, you can help obtain financial assistance, medical or mental health care, spiritual care services, or more simple items such as food. Discuss what can be expected in realistic terms.

Step 4: Act to Address the Need - Help your buddy to take action. For example, help him/her set an appointment with a needed service or assist him/her in completing paperwork.

If you are helping buddies problem solve, and they doubt their ability to overcome obstacles, reminding them of their successes in solving problems in difficult situations of the past. This process of borrowing personal strengths and successful accomplishments of the past may be more helpful than trying to build new strengths for the current obstacles.

Optional Activity

- Play a video clip that illustrates the concepts of self- and collective-efficacy and problem solving. There is a 4-minute segment in the movie *Aliens* that exemplifies these concepts well. In the clip, the transport ship that was going to take the characters off of the alien-filled planet crashes. Some characters exhibit strong self-efficacy and one character does not. The clip also exemplifies problem solving and that breathing is associated with relaxation. There is some swearing in the *Aliens* video clip.

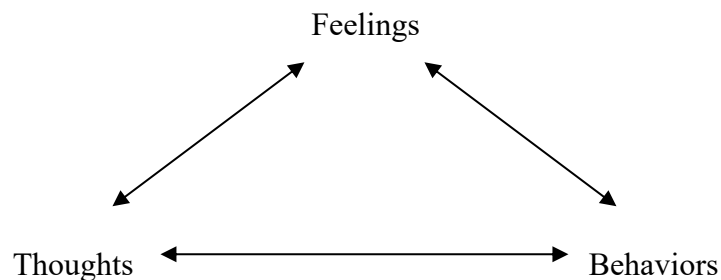
Positive Activity Scheduling

After difficult events, it is very common for people to stop doing things that used to be enjoyable, rewarding, or personally meaningful. This may be because 1) they are too busy with other problems caused by the events such as dealing with financial problems or helping loved ones, 2) they just don't feel like it anymore, or 3) they are avoiding places or situations because they bring up event-related feelings. Regardless of the reason why, we know that people feel sad, withdrawn, or apathetic when they no longer engage in pleasurable activities.

Learning Objectives

- To understand how scheduling positive activities can increase positive emotions

Let's spend a few minutes talking about the rationale for positive activity scheduling. Feeling sad, withdrawn or apathetic is common after difficult events. However, when these feelings become long lasting, they begin to interfere with the rest of your life. One explanation for feeling this way is that it results from, and is maintained by, having more negative experiences than positive ones. Positive experiences tend to cause positive emotions, whereas negative experiences tend to cause distressing emotions. Therefore, if you want to improve your mood, you need to increase positive experiences and decrease negative ones. Another way to think about this is to understand that our personalities are made up of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (*Show diagram*).



Feeling sad, withdrawn, or apathetic can come from any of these areas --- feelings, thoughts, or behaviors. In addition, each area affects the other two areas. When people feel down, often the first thing that they attempt to change is their feelings. This makes sense because the goal is to feel better. However, feelings are actually the most difficult of these three areas to control and change. As you have probably discovered, simply telling yourself to feel good usually does not work. In fact, it is easier to change your thoughts and behaviors, which will in turn change the way you feel. To help you to feel better, you can add positive activities into your life. You may already feel highly taxed and the idea of adding more activities to your current schedule may be stressful. If you regularly engage in many pleasant activities, it may be less important to schedule new positive events. If not, this skill might be very important for you.

Selecting and Scheduling Positive Activities - When thinking about activities you would like, consider activities that you think you would enjoy and that you think you would actually do. The activities should be meaningful, enjoyable, fun and/or lead to a sense of contribution or mastery. Consider activities from a range of areas. For example:

- Sports (soccer, tennis, running)
- Outdoors (camping, BBQ, hiking, fishing)
- Entertainment (movies, reading, computer games)
- Hobbies (woodworking, model making, work on collections)
- Clubs/Organizations (volunteering, joining a club of interest, coach a youth sports team)
- Social/Family (play card games, board games, Frisbee, or any of the activities above with a family member, e.g., family fishing, BBQ or reading a book as a family)

You might choose to do one new activity with your spouse/significant other, one with your children (or other family), one with a buddy, and one alone. Can you think of three or four positive activities that you can do this week?

Now what we know from working with people who are sad, withdrawn, or apathetic is that it is not enough just to tell yourself to do more things that are positive. The reason for this is that when you feel down, you often feel immobilized, have trouble making decisions, or are exhausted. Therefore, it is unlikely that you will feel like you have the energy or determination to get out there and do pleasant things. You may feel like you can't imagine ever having fun again or that you don't deserve to have fun in your life after the events that you have been through. In order to increase the chances of following through with the activities, you can use a calendar to schedule the activities and then follow your schedule. Remember, even if you don't feel like engaging in positive events due to feeling of sadness or lack of energy, it is important that you engage in some.

We have one more principle to go over.

Hope/Optimism

What is hope and why is it important?

- Hope is defined as “a positive, action-oriented expectation that a positive future goal or outcome is possible.”
- It is also considered a thinking process that taps a sense of agency and the awareness of the steps necessary to achieve one's goals.
- Hope can be a religious belief.

Exposure to difficult events is often accompanied by a loss of hope. Difficult events may destroy one's positive views of the world or overwhelm one's ability to cope. Those who are more likely to have favorable outcomes following difficult events are those who maintain one or more of the following characteristics:

- Optimism (because they can have hope for their future)
- Confidence that life is predictable
- Belief that things will work out as well as can reasonably be expected
- Belief that outside sources act benevolently on one's behalf (God, community, government)
- Strong faith-based beliefs
- Positive belief (for example, "I'm lucky, things usually work out for me")
- Practical provisions, including housing, employment, financial resources

*******Provider note:** Employment status is the primary predictor of hope in combat veterans. (It is important for Soldiers to see themselves as usefully employed.)

Optional Activity

- Play a video clip that illustrates the concept of hope. There are two video clips from the movie Shawshank Redemption that relate to hope. In the first, Andy has been released from solitary confinement and, during lunch, tells others how music helped him survive solitary confinement. Red says there is no place for hope in prison. In the second clip, Red is out of prison, gets a letter from Andy, and is going to meet Andy. Red feels differently about hope than he did before. There is some swearing in the Shawshank Redemption video clips. Potential discussion questions: What did you see in this clip? How was hope essential? [Can note how Andy's thinking of music helped] How was Red's hope restored/re-discovered? Was it ever totally lost (something led Red to the letter and money)? What are realistic outcomes for which one can hope? What is the relationship between hope and efficacy? [Hope gives willpower for efficacy] What do you think about statements: (1) "Hope is a good thing – maybe the best of things. And, no good thing ever dies" (2) "Get busy living or get busy dying"

Ways to improve hope and optimism include:

- Identify, amplify, and concentrate on building strengths
- Envision a realistic outcome even if the outcome may be difficult
- De-catastrophizing – not looking for or expecting the worse to happen
- Find benefit - look for the good that one can make of a difficult situation
- Use helpful thinking techniques to reduce irrational fears, control self-defeating behaviors, reduce your sense of personal responsibility for the difficult event and encourage positive coping

Helpful Thinking

After difficult events, it is common for people's appraisals about the world and themselves to change. For example, it is common to see the world as dangerous, stressful, or difficult. An individual might have trouble trusting other people or see oneself as unable to cope.

Most often, the changes in someone's views are extreme and not entirely accurate. These new appraisals can be hard to change unless people become aware of them. They can then learn to challenge them with appraisals that are more realistic.

How Thoughts Influence Feelings - Certain situations seem to make people react in certain ways. For example, being stuck in traffic might make someone feel angry. However, what is important about a reaction to a situation is not so much the circumstances of the event, but the thoughts a person has about the situation. If someone was stuck in traffic and he/she were thinking, "This is going to make me late and my boss will really punish me" they may feel anxious. On the other hand, if they were thinking, "Why am I always stuck behind stupid drivers?" they may feel frustrated and irritable. Alternatively, if they were thinking, "At least I'll miss that boring morning meeting," they may feel happy that they are in that situation.

Example event: Getting stuck in traffic

1a) ***Appraisal:*** I'm going to be late and get in trouble

1b) ***Emotion:*** Anxiety

2a) ***Appraisal:*** Why do I always get stuck behind stupid drivers?

2b) ***Emotion:*** Frustration

3a) ***Appraisal:*** I'm going to miss the boring morning meeting

3b) ***Emotion:*** Happiness

People's appraisal of the situation results in an emotional experience. Appraisals are different from feelings. They are the thoughts or beliefs about the situation that run through people's heads. Emotions result from the appraisals.

For people to change their emotional reactions, they need to change their appraisals about the things that happen to them. This is achieved in several steps:

1. Understand how appraisals influence your emotions

2. Increase awareness of the appraisals that cause you to have excessive negative feelings
3. Identify the emotions you feel when you make an appraisal that is not accurate
4. Replace the appraisals with more helpful thoughts, which will lead to new emotions

Let's look at this table that shows some of the more common unhelpful appraisals that lead to some of the emotional distress experienced after difficult events. Most people's thoughts will fall under the themes in the table below (e.g., relating to safety, control, blame). The table also includes some examples of alternative appraisals that can lead to less emotional distress.

Unhelpful Appraisals	Resulting Emotions	Alternative Appraisals	New Emotions
<i>Control</i>			
"I have no control over anything"	Helplessness; apathy; confusion; frustration	"I can control some decisions about my future" "Doing things gives me a greater sense of control" "Talking to someone about my problems shows I have some control"	Purposeful; hopeful; goal-oriented; less helpless
"I can't cope"	Helplessness; incompetency; fear	"The fact I got here today says I am coping a bit" "Everybody will have trouble after this event"	Less fearful; less helpless; oriented to seek support/help
<i>Safety</i>			
"The world is a dangerous place"	Scared; anxious; mistrustful	"The world can offer good possibilities" "The world is not always dangerous" "There are good people as well as bad in the world" "Most of the time I am safe"	Hopeful; active about future; trusting of people who will help
"I can't trust anyone"	Lonely; withdrawn; suspicious; sad	"Trusting people has led to me getting help" "I don't need to be mistrustful of everyone" "I can choose some people to trust"	More trusting, less suspicious; hopeful; optimistic
"I'm not safe"	Anxious; fearful; Insecure	"Feeling unsafe isn't the same as being unsafe" "A bad thing has happened but it doesn't mean it will happen again"	More relaxed; self-assured
<i>Blame</i>			
"This is unfair"	Angry; vengeful	"This could have happened to anyone" "Sometimes bad things happen to good people"	Understanding; realistic; resigned
"I should have prevented this"	Guilty; frustrated; low self-esteem; upset	"Nobody could have prevented this" "I can't always protect others"	Accepting; intact self-esteem
"I should have done more"	Guilty; frustrated; upset	"At the time I did the best I could" "I would not expect anyone else to have done more than I did"	Able to move on; reduced distress
"It's their fault this happened"	Angry; frustrated; vengeful; mistrust	"Blaming people doesn't change my situation"	Accepting; optimistic
"Things will never be the same again"	Sad; regretful; hopeless	"Feeling really bad usually doesn't last forever" "Thinking like this makes it difficult to plan for the future"	Future-oriented; accepting

Making appraisals that leave you depressed, anxious, or feeling helpless is understandable but leads to not being able to act in a helpful way. If the appraisals can be changed, and in turn, the emotional consequences are less negative, you are more likely to feel stronger, more in control and ready to plan for the next step.

Changing Unhelpful Thinking - The best way to change unhelpful thinking is to test your thoughts against your own experiences. That is, if you believe that you cannot feel safe again, it is useful to state how much you believe you cannot feel safe. Then test this belief over the next week by seeing how often this came true. This is the most powerful way one can see whether thinking in a more realistic way is useful.

It can be helpful for you to rate your belief in the truthfulness of your thoughts on a scale of 0-100%, where 100% is absolute belief that the thought is true. Now, find a way to test the accuracy of this belief. You will need to find specific examples of how the difficult event has made you feel.

Buddy Care - Helpful Thinking for Buddies

We can see an example of changing unhelpful thinking in an interaction between Allen and one of his buddies.

Appraisal Example: "I'm not safe" - It is common for people to have a pervasive feeling that they are at risk or not safe following a difficult event. Often people overestimate their risk for harm. In the following example, Allen's buddy is reluctant to be in crowded places after a recent bomb explosion in a public marketplace. He reports a strong belief in not being safe when he is around crowds of people.

Allen: So you avoid public places?

Buddy: Yeah-I get really shaky when I'm near a lot of people. I know it's stupid but I feel better even if I'm a block away from crowds.

Allen: But when you're a block away, you feel safe?

Buddy: Yeah, I feel ok. Not completely safe, but ok.

Allen: So, when you're less than one block away what do you worry will happen?

Buddy: That a bomb will go off and I'll get injured or killed. When I get closer to a crowd of people I usually start freaking out.

Allen: Thinking you're not safe because a bomb could go off in the crowd and injure you?

Buddy: Yeah.

Allen: If you want to test that appraisal, could you try standing close to a crowd and gather information about what happens when you are that close to a group of people?

Buddy: I could do that, but I would still feel quite freaked out if I was standing close.

Allen: If you're thinking, "I'm not safe" then you will begin to feel anxious and possibly freak out. What if you try getting close and replacing that appraisal with a new appraisal "Feeling unsafe isn't the same as being unsafe" and trying the process for just 10 minutes to start with. How do you think that would go?

Buddy: I may still freak out...I don't know.

Allen: Well that can be part of the information you gather. Try replacing your appraisal of “I'm not safe” with “feeling unsafe is not the same as being unsafe” and see what effect this has on your anxiety levels. Remember, you're only a few feet closer to the crowd and only staying there for 10 minutes. Ok?

Buddy: I'll give it a go.

Whether setting up and testing a new appraisal for yourself or a buddy, it is likely that you will meet with reluctance and resistance as Allen did in the case of helping his buddy. In these instances, it is important that you take part in the task (or when working with a buddy, encourage your buddy to take part) even if it's a situation that has been avoided for a long time. It may help to come up with a small first step that makes the task more manageable (e.g., staying for a short time and gradually increasing this, or getting gradually closer to the avoided situation). As the task helps you (or the buddy you are helping) gain evidence disconfirming the unhelpful appraisal, your confidence in testing further beliefs should improve. Acquiring these helpful thinking skills is like learning anything new; they will get better with practice. We encourage you to practice these helpful thinking skills on a daily basis.

OK, I am hopeful that these exercises have illustrated the importance and usefulness of maintaining a sense of hope or optimism even in the face of interpersonal or work-related challenges. We have now spent time covering—in a fair amount of detail—the principles of PFA: Safety, Calming, Connecting, Efficacy (self and community), and Hope.

We would like to get your feedback about the material we covered in the last two workshops. You will recall that when we met for workshop 1, we talked about basic coping skills, anger management, sleep problems and safety. When we met for workshop 2, we talked about calming techniques, connecting and barriers to care, and how you can help your buddies with each of these. We would like to know if you found this information useful.

- Have you used any of the PFA principles?
- Which PFA principles seem most important?
- Which PFA will you use later on?
- Did you share any PFA skills with others?
- Did you overcome any barriers to seeking care?
- Were you able to help a buddy or family?

Conclusion/Close

“Well once again it seems we’ve reached our time limit. This has been an excellent discussion. We really have covered a great deal of material in these three workshops; some philosophical but mostly practical things that can be applied to everyday challenges. We know everyday life can be challenging for anyone—but for folks such as you, who have sacrificed so much by spending time serving your nation, these everyday challenges can be magnified. We hope we’ve given you some tools to help bring these challenges back into perspective, to help address them in yourselves, your families, and in your buddies, and to help you recognize when and how to seek outside help and overcome the barriers to seeking that assistance. Please remember that the handouts, website (XX), toll-free telephone information line (XX), and email service (XX) are available and stay in touch with us. We want you to be successful and we are there to help, when you want our help. Thanks again!

----- End of Workshop 3 -----

WORKSHOP 4

Outline

- A. Safety
 - Helping Your Buddies Feel Safe
- B. Calming
 - Helping Your Buddy Become Calm
- C. Connecting
 - Supportive Connections with Your Buddies
- D. Barriers to Care
- E. Efficacy: Self and Collective Efficacy
 - Problem Solving
 - Helping Buddies Solve Problems
- F. Hope/Optimism

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. You have been involved in a series of workshops that focused upon issues and situations that often arise among Soldiers returning from a deployment and reestablishing garrison duties. Thank you for your cooperation and for the many concerns you have addressed during the workshops. We hope that the training has also been beneficial to you in dealing with any distress, health concerns or relationship issues.

Today's training is a "booster." We review of some of the materials we covered during the three previous workshops and reinforce the skills we want you to acquire during the training exercises. Just to remind you, this educational program is based on the concept of Psychological First Aid (PFA), a set of recommended principles developed by the National Center for PTSD, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, and others for assisting people after disasters and other traumatic events. We have adapted the PFA principles to make them applicable to Soldiers and their spouses in dealing with adjustments associated with the return from deployment.

Learning Objectives

- To review key concepts of the intervention
- To reinforce the principles of Psychological First Aid (PFA) and skills acquired during the three previous workshops

As we have noted, the training program is based upon the concept of Psychological First Aid, which is developed for assisting people after they experience difficult events. We modified the program so that it would be applicable to Soldiers, their spouses and buddies dealing with issues that may arise following a deployment. The training emphasized five PFA principles, Safety, Calming, Connecting, Self-efficacy, and Hope/Optimism.

These principles are designed to help us better cope with stressful events and better manage our reaction to such events. Before reviewing the principles of PFA, let's again look at the possible links between difficult events that we may experience and some of the reactions that may occur.

During the training, we used the term “difficult event” to describe any event that fell into the range of being mildly stressful to being very traumatic and challenging.

*******Provider instruction:** Ask the group to name difficult events. After they name a few, continue the presentation with brief comments regarding the following types of difficult events that occur.

- Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes
- Man-made disasters such as industrial accidents, war
- Personal events such as relationship problems, financial problems, and family conflicts.

*******Provider note:** Reactions to difficult situation cover a wide range such as those associated with PTSD to those that may be less serious. Review the following three reactions that are usually associated with PTSD.

Intrusive reactions: The ways in which traumatic experiences come back to mind. These reactions include distressing thoughts or mental images of the event, or dreams about what happened.

Avoidance and withdrawal reactions: the ways people use to keep away from, or protect against intrusive reactions. These include trying to avoid talking, thinking, and having feelings about the traumatic event.

Physical arousal reactions: These are physical changes that make the body react as if danger is still present. These reactions include constantly being “on the lookout” for danger, being jumpy or startling easily, anger, sleep, and concentration difficulties.

*******Provider note:** Mention the following reactions to difficult events that the participants may be more familiar with. These are:

Grief reactions: feeling of sadness and anger or regret over a death.

Depression: loss of pleasure in life activities, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts,

Anxiety: worry, panic and fear

Then there are the physical reactions to difficult events that are experienced in the absence of any underlying

injury or illness. These reactions may be due to stressors associated with day-to-day hassles and difficult events. Examples of such physical reactions are headaches, pains in the chest, feeling low or down, stomach aches, bowel/bladder problems, numbness/tingling, feeling weak, etc. Many of these physical reactions may be related to different aspect of stress. Such reactions are understandable and not unusual. However, if a person's ability to function adequately continues for over a month, psychological services should be considered.

*******Provider instruction:** The group should be reminded of secondary adversities or events that may happen after the primary difficult event such as financial problems, legal problems, unexpected losses or changes in living or health situations. Such situations that may occur after a deployment can prolong stress and grief reactions and increase the risk of depression and hopelessness. Secondary adversities can greatly interfere with functioning at work, in the family, in romantic and interpersonal relationships and in the community. Ask the group to identify any secondary adverse situations that they experienced following their return from the deployment or in conjunction with the deployment.

Principles of Psychological First Aid

Safety

Safety is one of the five principles of psychological first aid. We shared some general ideas about safety and how it can affect many areas of your life. For example, we discussed things you can do to: 1) make judgments about your safety and the safety of others and, 2) how you might deal with safety issues when you recognize them in yourself and in others.

Questions to the Group

- How would you define “a sense of safety?”
- How do you compare your current sense of safety with that you experienced during the deployment?
- Do you feel any particular threat to your safety?
- What can we do or not do to improve our safety?

*******Provider instruction:** Use the following to review/reinforce the PFA principle of Safety

Usually, people have some belief in their sense of safety, some sense that their world will not come crashing down on them. This has been called the “bubble of safety” or “shield of confidence.” However, very difficult events such as a threat to life or limb can alter our sense of safety by bursting our bubble of safety or lowering our shield of confidence. In these situations, it may take some time before a sense of safety can be restored

Feeling safe is important. A psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed that everyone is motivated by a common hierarchy of needs. In the hierarchy, having a sense of safety is just above the most basic physiological and biological basic life needs for food, water, sleep, etc.

There are ways to increase your sense of safety. First, connect with and know your feelings and evaluate any threats or risks of harm so you can appropriately respond. A threat appraisal or an evaluation of your risk of harm can help you decide what action to take to improve your sense of safety. Such an appraisal may also help you recognize that you are not in an unsafe situation.

Another way to improve safety is to remove whatever is preventing you from feeling safe or to remove yourself from the environment where you feel unsafe. Because of your experiences while deployed you may feel unsafe in crowds or on bridges. However, here in the States, crowds and bridges do not carry the same risks for harm. Avoiding crowds and bridges altogether will not help you regain a sense of safety. Be careful not to link harmless images, people and things to dangerous stimuli associated with the original difficult event.

Sometimes, talking with others about why and when you are feeling unsafe may be supportive if it is limited and does not make individuals more anxious. Safety also involves safety from bad news, rumors, and other interpersonal factors that may increase threat perception. Avoid the sharing of horror stories that may increase psychological distress.

Helping Your Buddies Feel Safe

Promoting safety can reduce distress and worry for your buddies. A sense of safety can be supported in a number of ways with your buddies. Buddy safety can be supported when you:

- Get current accurate and up-to-date information
- Get connected with available practical resources
- Get connected with others who have shared similar experiences
- Do things that are active, practical, and familiar
- Avoid exposure to information that is inaccurate or excessively upsetting; this may include helping your buddies to limit their exposure to TV, movies, radios, certain sights and sounds

You can help your buddies reevaluate perceptions of threat by discussing the situation. This may involve:

- Challenging the perception of threat
- Emphasizing the positive ways in which your buddies faced and overcame a previous threat
- Acknowledging your buddy's reaction and expressing your understanding and interest in helping will go a long way in making your buddies feel accepted and cared for

Calming

*******Provider note:** It is very common for people who have experienced a difficult time to feel tense, anxious, overwhelmed with emotions and unable to stop thinking about or imagining what happened. These are normal and expected responses to difficult events. Extremely high arousal, numbing, or extreme anxiety can interfere with sleep, eating, decision making, parenting, work and other life tasks. Calming is a skill that can be used whenever tension and anxiety occur and is especially important when reactions are so intense and persistent that they interfere with one's ability to function.

We taught you some specific skills or techniques to help you calm yourself when tense, anxious or emotionally overwhelmed. We also taught you how to help your buddies remain calm. Before we review calming techniques, I would like to know if any of you have tried to use either the breathing exercise or muscle relaxation exercise. If you have, tell us about the situation, the technique that you used and if you found the technique to be useful.

If no one has used either the breathing or muscle relaxation exercise, repeat the breathing exercise and muscle relaxation exercises and encourage participants to use them during times when they feel anxious or “on edge”

*******Provider instruction:** Use the following script for the breathing exercise:

Many people believe that taking a deep breath helps them calm down when they are stressed or anxious. However, contrary to this belief, taking a deep breath usually is not helpful and can actually lead to more feelings of anxiety. A good way to cope with anxiety is to take a normal breath and exhale slowly. While you exhale, try saying the word CALM or RELAX very slowly to yourself, like this, C-a-a-a-a-a-l-m. If you do not find the words “calm” or “relax” to be helpful, it is also fine to use the word “exhale” or some other word of your choosing.

In addition to exhaling slowly while saying “calm” to yourself, I want you to slow down your breathing. Very often, when people become frightened or upset, they feel like they need more air and may hyperventilate in response to that feeling. Hyperventilation does not have a calming effect. Hyperventilation tells our bodies to prepare for danger and causes feelings of anxiety. Unfortunately, when we are under stress, many of us hyperventilate without even realizing it. Unless we are preparing for a very dangerous situation, we often do not need as much air as we are taking in. If we want to calm down, what we really need to do is to slow down our breathing and take in less air.

*******Provider instruction:** Model how to inhale, exhale slowly saying, “CALM” pause and count to four and repeat. Then ask the Soldier to perform the exercise according to the following instructions.

Let’s practice: Focus on your breathing. Take a normal breath and exhale very slowly while silently repeating the cue word. Pause and count to four before taking the next breath. How did that go for you? Did you have any problems?

Remember, breathing exercises can be very useful in specific situations like:

- In times of high stress (e.g., traffic)
- When encountering reminders of difficult events
- When emotionally upset (e.g., after arguments with a spouse or family member)

Learn to use breathing exercises, especially when you are:

- Tense, irritable, anxious, frustrated or annoyed
- Shaky, trembling or feeling “keyed up”
- Feeling out of control or have the urge to escape your current situation
- Finding it hard to relax
- Not sleeping or have poor sleep
- Having difficulty concentrating

*******Provider instruction:** Check to see if anyone has tried the muscle relaxation technique. If so, have them model what they did and whether it was useful. Talk the Soldiers through the following progressive relaxation exercise:

- Sit comfortably in your chair and close your eyes
- Feel your feet, relax them, start with your toes and move up to your ankles
- Feel your knees, relax them and feel all of the tension go out of them,
- Feel your upper legs and thighs, relax them and feel them release any tension,
- Feel your abdomen and chest and sense your breathing, deepen your breathing, breath out any tension, breath in calmness and peacefulness.
- Feel your buttocks, relax and let it sink further into the chair, relax that tension and let the tension go
- Feel your hands and let them sink into your lap
- Feel your upper arms, your shoulders, your neck your head and skull, your mouth and jaw, your eyes and your face and cheeks. Relax them,
- You are now completely relaxed, mentally scan your body. If you find any place that is still tense, relax it as you sink into a deeper and deeper state of relaxation. As I count to ten, you will get more and more

relaxed. Now slowly open your eyes and become aware of your surroundings.

*******Provider note:** The participants can be told that they can engage in self-talk and talk themselves through this type of progressive relaxation whenever they feel tense or anxious. For both those who develop more severe stress reactions and the general population of exposed individuals, “normalization” of stress reactions is a key intervention principle to enhance calming. When individuals interpret their experiences in distressing ways, such pathologizing of their own common responses is likely to increase anxiety associated with these reactions. Normalizing and validating expectable and intense emotional states and promoting survivors’ capacities to tolerate and regulate them are important intervention goals at all levels. Disaster survivors should avoid pathologizing their inability to remain calm and free of the expectable intense emotions that are the natural consequences of such threatening and tragic events. In any such intervention, it should not be underestimated that people’s agitation and anxiety are due to real concerns and actions that help them directly solve these concerns are the best antidotes for the vast majority.

Buddy Care- Helping Your Buddy Become Calm

In general, the following steps will help to calm most distressed individuals

- When you notice a buddy having problems ask how they are doing and if there is anything you can do to help
- Respect his/her privacy
- Remain calm, quiet and present
- Be available if the person needs additional help
- Offer support and help the focus on manageable feelings, thoughts and goals

If your buddy is too agitated, and upset, shows extreme anxiety, fear or panic, consider doing the following:

- Take your buddy to a quiet place to talk
- Ask your buddy to listen to you and look at you
- Find out if he/she knows where he/she is and what is happening
- Enlist other buddies, family or friends in providing comfort to the distressed individual

Try to understand what your buddy is experiencing. Is he/she crying, panicking, experiencing a “flashback” or imagining that a difficult event is taking place? Address the person’s primary immediate concern or difficulty rather than simply trying to convince them to “calm down” or “feel safe.” **Make a referral to professional help if the situation does not improve.**

Connecting

Connecting with others includes seeking support and giving support to others. Social support is one of the most consistently identified protective factors for combating stress. After difficult events, a lack of connection with social supports may lead to loneliness and emotional distance, which can increase the risks for problems such as PTSD.

Social support can help you in different ways:

- Increases opportunities for knowledge and problem solving
- Allows for sharing of experiences and concerns
- Feeling needed, wanted understood and cared for
- Feeling like you fit in and belong
- Build up your confidence that you can handle the problem you are facing.

There are times when seeking the help of others are vital:

- An acute medical problem that needs immediate attention
- An acute mental health problem (someone threatening harm to self or others)
- Domestic, child or elder abuse
- Significant developmental concerns about children or adolescents
- When pastoral counseling is desired
- Alcohol or drug problems
- Ongoing problems with difficult events (still having problems 4+ weeks after event)

Steps in Getting Support

1. **“What Do I Want?”** The first step is to figure out what you really want or need:
 - A. **Look Outside Yourself:** What kind of problem am I facing that I may need support from others to cope with?
 - B. **Look Inside Yourself:** What am I thinking and feeling inside that I may need support from others to cope with?
2. **“Whom Should I Ask?”** Think about who has been or could be a good source of support.
3. **Find the Right Time.** Choose the right time and place to approach the person.
4. **Request With an “I” Messages.** Use an “I” messages to communicate: how you are feeling about the situation and what you want the person to do.
5. **Thank the Person.** End the conversation thanking the person for listening or for how you were helped. Be specific so he/she knows how to help in the future.

Supportive Connections with Your Buddies

There are five basic steps to learning to provide support to others:

1. What kind of problem is the person facing?
2. What type of support can you provide?
3. What is the right time to talk to the person
4. Offer to help by showing that you care and would like to help
5. Provide help in a sensitive way

The way you respond to buddies who are seeking help can be important. Negative support such as minimizing problems or needs, providing unrealistic expectations, or invalidating messages can be undermining. You can help buddies by providing positive and supportive comments that are reflective (It sounds like you are saying...”), clarifying (“tell me if I’m wrong...it sounds like you...”), supportive (“No wonder you feel..., it sounds like you are being hard on yourself”).

Barriers to Care

In spite of high levels of psychological distress associated with combat deployment and exposure to dangerous and difficult events, many active duty Soldiers fail to seek mental health care. If individuals are reluctant to seek support, there may be many reasons, including:

- Not knowing what they need
- Feeling guilty about receiving help
- Not knowing where to turn for help
- Feeling that they will get so upset that they will lose control
- Fearing the people they ask will be angry or make them feel guilty
- Worrying that they will be a burden to others
- Doubting that support will be helpful or not trusting mental health professionals
- Having tried to get help and finding that help was not there
- Not being able to afford or access help.

Barriers to Seeking Care in the Military

- Not trusting mental health professionals
- Not knowing where to get help
- Not having sufficient transportation
- Feeling it difficult to get an appointment
- Difficulty getting time off from work

- It costs too much money
- It would be too embarrassing
- It would harm my career
- The unit would have less confidence in me
- The unit leadership might treat me differently
- My leaders would blame me for the problem
- I would be seen as weak
- Mental Health care does not work

*******Provider instruction:** Conduct a brief reality check to see if the barriers to seeking care reflect myth or reality.

It is paramount that interventions identify those who lack strong social support, who are likely to be more socially isolated, or whose support system might provide undermining messages. Keeping them connected, training people how to access support and providing formalized support where informal social support fails will be important.

After difficult events, some people choose not to talk about their experiences. In these instances, the focus of support should not be on discussing the difficult event or loss, but rather on providing practical assistance and problem-solving current needs and concerns. Even if difficult events are not discussed or no talking takes place, spending time with supportive people can be extremely helpful.

Efficacy: Self and Collective Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief in one's own capacity to achieve positive and successful outcomes. Because of this positive belief, the individual will be more likely to make consistent and organized efforts in the direction of his/her goal.

Collective efficacy is the belief that group goals are attainable. Self-efficacy can be built by learning problem-solving skills, helpful and optimistic thinking, and thorough demonstrations of how individuals, families and groups can work together to overcome adversity. Learning problem-solving skills can strengthen your belief in your ability to handle problems and achieve goals.

Problem Solving

Problem solving is a useful tool because it can be used to think about reducing stress reactions, addressing

interpersonal problems, and respond to practical obstacles. It can help you cut problems down to size and successfully tackle many challenges.

What are the three steps we learned that are components of the problem solving process?

- Define the problem so it can be expressed in a clear and concise manner
- Make a list of possible solutions. The goal is to come up with ideas and not worry about how effective they will be.
- Choosing the best solution. You can get rid of any solutions that do not seem helpful and pick solutions that seem reasonable

Remember that the problem solving technique will work for all kinds of problems. However, it will help to practice the three-step process for it to work.

Helping Buddies Solve Problems

You can help your buddies with problem solving. When buddies are facing adversity, providing them with needed resources can increase a sense of empowerment, hope and restored dignity. Fellow Soldiers may welcome a pragmatic focus and assistance with problem solving.

As much as possible, help your buddy address identified needs because problem solving may be more difficult under conditions of stress and adversity. Teaching individuals to set achievable goals may reverse feelings of failure, an inability to cope, help individuals to have repeated success experiences, and help to reestablish a sense of control.

Steps in helping your buddies solve problems

1. **Help to identify your buddy's most immediate needs:** If a buddy has identified several needs, it will be necessary to focus on them one at a time.
2. **Clarify the need:** Specify the problem. If the problem is understood, and clarified, it will be easier to identify practical steps that can be taken to address it.
3. **Discuss an action plan:** Your buddy may say what he/she would like to be done, or you can offer suggestions. Discuss what can be expected in realistic terms.
4. **Act to address the need:** Help your buddy to take action. For example, help him/her set up appointments.

If you are helping buddies problem solve, and they doubt their ability to overcome obstacles, reminding them of their successes in solving problems in difficult situations in the past may be useful. This process of borrowing

personal strengths and successful accomplishments of the past may be more helpful than trying to build new strengths for the current obstacles.

Hope/Optimism

What do we mean by the psychological first aid principle of “Hope/Optimism.?”

- Hope is defined as “a positive, action-oriented expectation that a positive future goal or outcome is possible.
- It is also considered a thinking process that taps a sense of agency and the awareness of the steps necessary to achieve one’s goals.
- Hope can also revolve around one’s spiritual beliefs, having a responsive government or just the belief that things will be all right and work out

Those who are more likely to have favorable outcomes following difficult events are those who maintain one or more of the following characteristics:

- Optimism (Someone will always be there)
- Confidence that life is predictable
- Belief that things will work out as well as can be expected
- Belief that outside sources act benevolently on one’s behalf (God, community, government)
- Strong faith-based beliefs or the belief that one is lucky
- Hope can be enhanced when individuals are helped to get their lives back together (housing, employment, replaced household goods, etc.)

Skills to improve Hope and Optimism

- Identify, amplify, and concentrate on building strengths
- Envision a realistic outcome even if the outcome may be difficult
- Decatastrophize, not looking for or expecting the worse to happen
- Find benefit, look for the good that one can make of a difficult situation
- Use helpful thinking techniques to reduce irrational fears, control self-defeating behaviors, reduce ones sense of personal responsibility for the difficult event and encourage positive coping.

We would like to get your feedback about the material we covered in the previous workshops. You will recall that when we met for our first workshop we talked about basic coping skills, anger management, sleep problems and safety. When we met for our second workshop, we talked about calming techniques, connecting, and barriers to care. When we met for our third workshop, we talked about Hope/Optimism, helpful thinking, problem solving, and positive activity scheduling. In each prior workshop, we talked about how to apply the

skills to your life as well as how to help a buddy. Again, we would like to know if you found this information useful.

Questions about PFA and other program content:

- Have you used any of the five PFA principles?
- Which PFA principles seem most important?
- Did you use any of the techniques such as relaxation, helpful thinking, problem solving?
- Did you find that you thought differently about a problem based on what you have learned?
- Which PFA will you use later on?
- Did you share any PFA skills with others?
- Did you overcome any barriers to seeking care?
- Were you able to help a buddy or family?

Questions about the program:

- Overall, was what you learned helpful?
- Do you have questions that we did not discuss?
- Were our responses to questions helpful?
- What did you think of the evaluations?
- Would you encourage others to attend the program?
- What are your recommendations for future workshops?

Conclusion/Close

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handout: *The Bottom Line*

We have one more handout that I want to mention before we end today. It is the handout called “The Bottom Line.” This handout has just five final thoughts that I would like to leave with you today. Let’s look at it...

We have reviewed and reinforced the five core principles of Psychological First Aid focused upon meeting some concerns of mortuary affairs Soldiers returning from a deployment in which they were exposed to combat and stressful combat deployment events. The principles of Safety, Calming, Connecting, Self- and collective-efficacy, and Hope/Optimism are applicable to all levels of intervention, from those focusing on the individual to those that are community based. We are grateful for your participation in the educational process. Are there any questions?

*******Provider instruction:** Distribute handouts:

- *Helpful Coping Strategies*
- *Take Home Points*
- *Following Medical Recommendations for Health*

----- **End of Workshop 4** -----

HANDOUT LIST

Orientation: Topics: Recruitment, Resources, Safety

- *Five Principles of Psychological First Aid*
- *Resources List*

Workshop 1: Topics: PFA, Common Reactions, Coping, Family, Anger, Sleep, Alcohol, Safety

- *Alcohol, Medication and Drug Use after Difficult Events*
- *Common Reactions when Dealing with Difficult Events*

Workshop 2: Topics: Calming, Connecting, Barriers to Care

- *Calming Techniques*
- *Connecting with Others: Giving Social Support*

Workshop 3: Topics: Self-Efficacy (Problem Solving, Positive Activity Sched), Hope (Helpful Thinking)

- *Helping Your Buddy Solve Problems*
- *Problem-Solving*

Workshop 4: Topics: Review of all previous topics

- *Following Medical Recommendations for Health*
- *Helpful Coping Strategies*
- *Take Home Points*
- *The Bottom Line*

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