



Teens

Psychological First Aid
A Minnesota Community Support Model



Why Should You Learn Psychological First Aid (PFA)?

- Helps you to understand stress, and what it does to your mind and body
- Gives you simple tools to help yourself, your friends, and your family.
- It can be used anytime, anywhere.
- Uses skills you probably already have...

“Stress is the effect of anything in life to which people must adjust.”

- Anything we consider difficult causes stress, even if it is something we want to do.



The key is that stress forces us to make adjustments (changes) to our thoughts and behavior while at the same time making demands upon our mind & body's energy.

Psychosocial Stress Response

Fear and Distress
Response

Impact of
Event

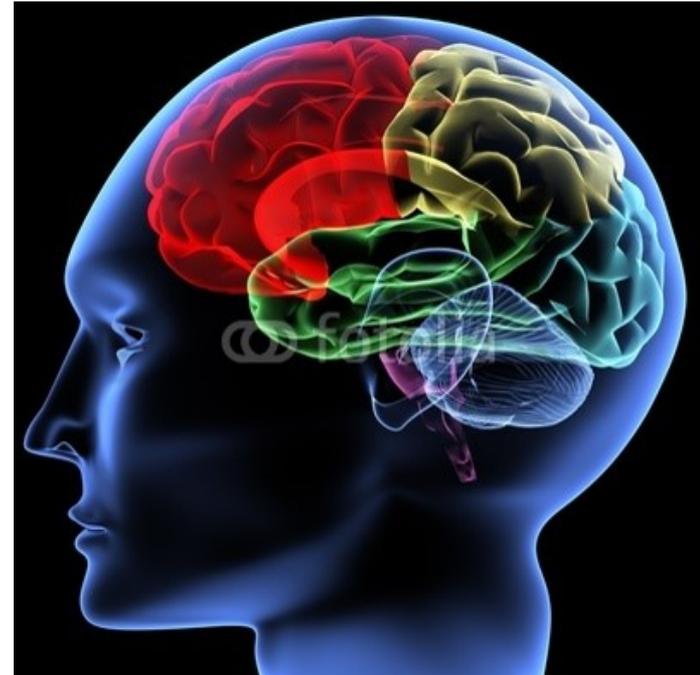
Behavior
Change

Psychiatric
Illness

Adapted from: Source: Butler AS, Panzer AM, Goldfrank LR, Institute of Medicine Committee on Responding to the Psychological Consequences of Terrorism Board of on Neuroscience and Behavioral Health. Preparing for the psychological consequences of terrorism: A public health approach. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press, 2003.

How Stress Works on Your Body

Under extreme stress your frontal lobe turns off, and your limbic system (cave man brain) turns on.



Threat & the Stress Response

- The Stress Response occurs Every Time our brain and body feel threatened
- Just thinking about something stressful can turn on the Stress Response
- When turned ON our brain starts to release over 1,400 chemicals and 30 different hormones that flood our whole body and help us in an emergency.



Adapted from: The Center for Mind-Body Medicine, Debra Kaplan, Lora Matz

Fight, Flight, or Freeze

Seen/Felt

- Pupils dilate
- Mouth goes dry
- Muscles tense
- Heart pumps faster
- Breathing becomes fast and shallow



Unseen

Brain gets body ready to act by:

- Releasing adrenaline
- Blood pressure rises
- Liver releases glucose for muscle energy
- Digestion slows

Common Physical Reactions Teens

- Sleep problems
- Constipation/diarrhea
- Stomach upset, nausea
- Headaches
- Rash/Acne
- Muscle aches/stiffness
- Sweaty palms
- Feeling out of control of your own body



Common Emotional Reactions Teen

- Fear or Anxiety
- Sadness or Tearfulness
- Anger or Irritability
- Feelings of inadequacy or worthlessness
- Feeling of guilt
- Loss of sense of “Safety”
- Numb, withdrawn
- Lack of enjoyment in favorite activities
- Feelings of emptiness or hopelessness



Common Behavioral Reactions Teens

- Impulsive behaviors
 - Unsafe sex
 - Alcohol/Drugs
- Aggressive behaviors
 - Bullying
 - Arguments with friends and family
- Isolation/avoidance
 - Places, activities, or people that bring back memories



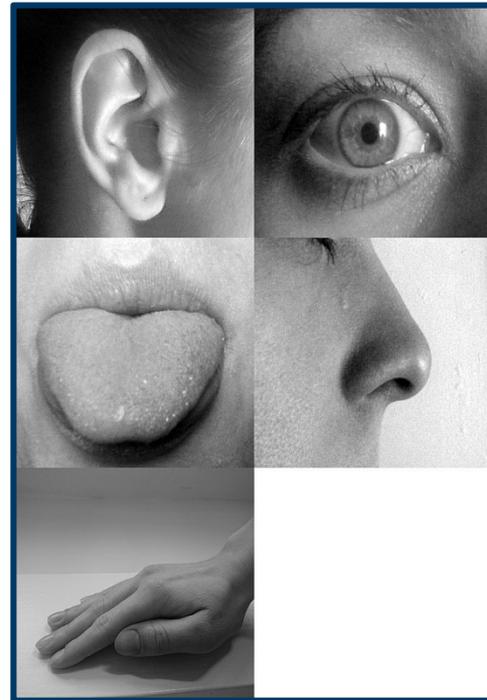
Common Cognitive Reactions Teens

- Difficulty concentrating, feeling spacey
- Difficulty with remembering things
- Not able to forget about it (Intrusive Memories)
- Day dreaming
- Recurring dreams, nightmares
- Feeling on edge/watching out for danger



Common Sensory Reactions Teens

- Sight
- Sound
- Smell
- Taste
- Touch



Common Spiritual Reactions Teens

- Comfort in our faith community
- Moving closer to our beliefs
- Moving away from our belief system
- Anger at what we see as an injustice
- Developing a new viewpoint of the world



What Helps Us Deal with Stress?

- Being able to look at what happened
- Without blame to self or others
- Understanding our stress reactions
- Feeling like we have some control over what is going on in our life.





Psychological First Aid Youth Help Card

SAFETY

Have a Plan
Make a Kit

CALM

Listen
Relax

CONNECT

Check In
Buddy Up

EMPOWER

Think Positive
Accept Guidance
Take Action

If you or someone you know is
feeling overwhelmed – Ask an adult
for help!



Psychological First Aid Youth Help Card

STRESS PREVENTION TIPS

Talk it out

Move your body

Eat healthy

Say No to tobacco, alcohol,
& illegal drugs

Cool your temper

Get enough sleep

Learn your stress triggers

Breathe from your gut

If you or someone you know is
feeling overwhelmed – Ask an adult
for help!

- Remove from immediate danger area as soon as possible
- Meet basic survival needs



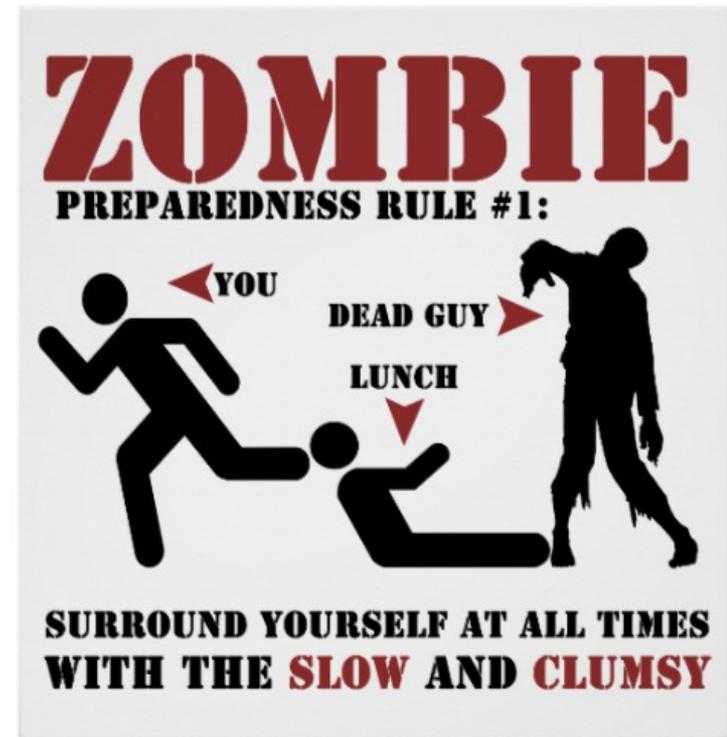
Safety

Remember Safety First!

Make a Plan

Take steps for becoming prepared for emergencies

- Develop a family emergency communications plan
- Determine an emergency meeting place
- Learn about local resources & support services



Be prepared to take care of yourself in an emergency

- Personal “To Go Kit”
- Safety tools
- Food/water
- Medication
- Entertainment
- Winter Car Kit
- DRAT! (Readiness Actions for Teens)



- Most often, people just need someone to talk to about their experience
- We all want to know someone to cares about us
- We all want someone to really listen, without judgment
- We all want someone to **BE PRESENT WITH US!**



Calm

Use Body Language

- Face the person & eye contact
- Show supportive facial expressions
- Nod your head to show you understand
- Stay relaxed
- Lean in toward the person



Use Active Listening Skills

Verbal

- Silence is OK
- Let them tell their story their own way
- Don't interrupt
- Ask questions to understand
- Don't judge or ask "Why?" and "Why not?"
- Don't give your opinion
 - Remember it is not about you!

TALK LESS
LISTEN MORE

Source: Gerald Jacobs, U.DMHI, 2005

Use Stress Reduction skills

- Deep Breathing
- Muscle relaxation
- Visualization
- Play/Laugh
- Get enough sleep
- Move your body



Let people know how you are doing and if you need help

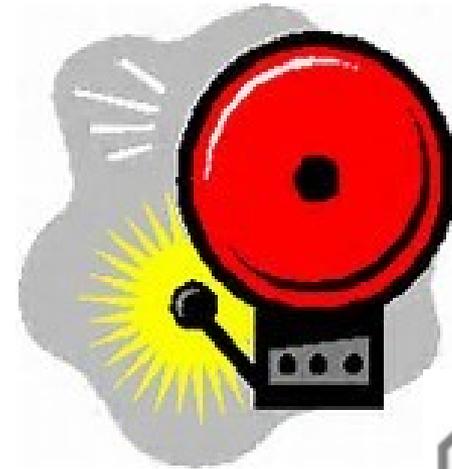
- Let your loved ones know that you are safe
- Talk out your problems with friends, family, and trusted adults
- Connect with crisis support services
- State-wide crisis hot-line (1-866-379-6367)



Alarm Bells/Get HELP Now! Talk with a Trusted Adult

If you or a friend are talking about:

- Harm to self
 - Saying they want to:
“End it all”
“Go to sleep and never wake up again”
- Preoccupation with death
- Giving away possessions
- Excessive anger
- Use of substances
 - Driving under influence
 - Using at school



**Disaster
Distress
Helpline**

PHONE: 1-800-985-5990
TEXT: "TalkWithUs" to 66746
WEB: disasterdistress.samhsa.gov

TEXTME:839863
Keyword: "Life"

- Don't try to go it alone
- Reach out to others
- Help your friends, family and community
- Helping others makes you feel good too!
- Look out for younger kids or those that might need a little extra help



How we think shapes how we feel!

- Stressful negative thoughts – those “what ifs.....”
 - Cause muscles to tense and send our mind a “Danger, Danger” signal
- Positive thoughts – “I can handle this...”
 - Allow our body to stay relaxed and tells our mind that we are in control



Empowerment Accept Guidance

Sometimes we all need a helping hand

- Give yourself a break
- Allow other to help you with problem solving
- It is a sign of strength to know your own limits and to ask for help
- Learn from your past experiences
- the successes as well as the mistakes



- Learn what triggers stress for you
- Learn to be flexible with life
- Take care of your body and your physical health
- Take care of your mind by stretching your mental muscles
- Practice stress reduction and self care daily



Teen PFA Resources

- Resilience for Teens: Got Bounce?
(American Psychological Association)
<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/bounce.aspx>
- Minnesota Department of Health, Behavioral Health Web page
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/behavioral/index.html>
- Just-in-Time PFA Training video -11 minute video based on the MDH Adult PFA First Aid Card
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sa7WiL1xwQg>

For More Information

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MDH Behavioral Health Web Sites:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/behavioral/index.html>

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