

# Psychosocial Capacity Building

## Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is an internationally-recognized, first stage approach to supporting people who have recently experienced a distressing event such as a disaster, pandemic or emergency. Evidence shows that people recover better from these experiences if they feel safe, connected, and emotionally supported. PFA focuses on the social and psychological support that people need most after experiencing a distressing event, providing humane and practical assistance in a way that respects their dignity, culture, and abilities. These trainings will help participants to understand the most supportive things to say and do and will provide information about how best to approach disaster, pandemic, and emergency situations to ensure personal safety and the safety of others.

## PFA for a Pandemic (For Responders/Helpers & Community Members)

The 2 hour interactive online training focusses on the 5 essential elements for effective disaster psychosocial response, key PFA action principles, and self-care for responders, with particular focus on responding and recovering from the psychosocial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This training addresses how to respond remotely (phone/online platforms) to individuals that may be quarantined or practicing self-isolation/physical distancing in order to prevent the spread of a pandemic. Participants will have the opportunity to apply the PFA action Principles to an adapted scenario, with time for discussion and sharing. The workshop is designed to build participant confidence and skills to offer timely, relevant PFA support to individuals, families, and communities. Our intended audience includes professionals and non-professionals (e.g., non-clinicians), both within AHS and in communities across Alberta.

To register email: [HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca](mailto:HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca)

## PFA for a Pandemic: General Train the Trainer (T3) Webinar

This interactive webinar is designed to create psychosocial and disaster/emergency response capacity both within AHS and in community, by training PFA facilitators to offer these webinars to their community stakeholders, organizations, and members of the public. The goal is to expand PFA knowledge and skills to build community capacity, care and resilience both during the COVID-19 pandemic and for future disaster/emergencies.

PFA T3 training requires completion of the 2 hour webinar for responders/helpers and community members, and/or 6 hour in class workshop (on hold until further notice during the pandemic), prior to registration for this 3 hour Train the Trainer workshop. This workshop covers the key elements of PFA amid the COVID-19 pandemic, review of the core training materials and administrative processes, along with opportunities to experience and discuss facilitation of the interactive workshop elements. Follow up coaching/mentoring supports are available for new facilitators.

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## PFA for a Pandemic, with Child, Youth & Family

This 2 hour interactive webinar has been developed to support professionals (e.g., teachers, school administration staff, community partners, counsellors), as well as parents and caregivers to enhance

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skills and increase confidence when supporting children, youth, and families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This workshop builds on the foundations of the AHS PFA program, providing a compassionate and caring response that addresses basic, social, and emotional needs in the impact and response phases of this pandemic. While the learning objectives are similar to the PFA workshop for helpers, responders, and community members, it also includes additional content and resources for the following areas:

- Identifying and responding to common stress reactions for children and youth
- Understanding how to identify and address safety concerns for children, youth, and families
- Identifying and providing practical support for children, youth, and families
- Strategies to help stabilize intense emotions for children of all age groups

To register email: [HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca](mailto:HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca)

## **PFA for a Pandemic: Train the Trainer (T3) Webinar – Child, Youth & Family**

This interactive webinar is designed to create psychosocial and response capacity both within AHS and in community, by training PFA facilitators to offer these webinars to their community stakeholders, organizations, and members of the public. The goal is to expand PFA knowledge and skills to build community capacity, care, and resilience both during the COVID-19 pandemic and for the impacts of future disaster/emergencies.

PFA T3 training requires completion of the 2 hour webinar for children, youth, and families, and/or 6 hour in class workshop (on hold until further notice during the pandemic), prior to registration for this 3 hour train the trainer workshop. This workshop covers the key elements of PFA with children, youth, and families amid the COVID-19 pandemic, review of the core training materials and administrative processes, along with opportunities to experience and discuss facilitation of the interactive workshop elements. Follow up coaching/mentoring supports are available for new facilitators.

To register email: [HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca](mailto:HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca)

## **PFA for a Pandemic, for Indigenous Communities (PFA-IC)**

This 2.5 hour facilitated interactive PFA webinar has been adapted from the AHS PFA Indigenous Community 6 hour in-person training. The PFA-IC was developed in consultation with direction from a provincial Indigenous advisory committee in 2016 and recent ongoing consultation has led to the current online PFA-IC for a pandemic workshop. The PFA-IC approach/tools are driven by Indigenous values using a holistic and community-centered approach. This approach has potential to reduce levels of emotional distress for Indigenous communities following a disaster/emergency/pandemic through practical care, compassion, connection with and support from others. This workshop is designed to be facilitated by Indigenous health workers, with cultural safety and relevance in mind. Our goal with this PFA training is to share knowledge and skills, build confidence, and capacity to support individuals, families and communities in the face of an emergency or a disaster, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Learning Objectives:

- Understand timing of interventions for disasters and emergencies
- Describe the 4 key principles of PFA
- Self-care strategies for disaster response
- Identify and be able to provide practical support to individuals experiencing stress
- Application of the Indigenous Wellness Framework
- Understand when to refer people to appropriate community based services/cultural and traditional supports

To register email: [HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca](mailto:HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca)

## **PFA for a Pandemic, Train the Trainer (T3) for Indigenous Communities (PFA-IC)**

This 2.5 hour interactive online session is designed to create psychosocial and disaster response capacity, by training Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit PFA Facilitators to offer these webinars to their community stakeholders, organizations, and members of the public. The PFA-IC T3 approach and tools are driven by Indigenous values using a holistic and community-centered approach. This workshop covers the key elements of PFA amid the COVID-19 pandemic, review of the core training materials and administrative processes, along with opportunities to experience and discuss facilitation of the interactive workshop elements. Follow-up coaching and mentoring supports are available for new facilitators.

To register email: [HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca](mailto:HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca)

## **PFA for Disasters, Emergencies and Crisis Events**

Prior to the pandemic, PFA training was delivered in a 6 hour, experiential, skills focused in class workshop. This in person 6 hour training offers extensive group activities and experiential role plays to build PFA skills and knowledge. It includes content focused on disaster, emergency and crisis response, demonstrated PFA's relevance and benefits across diverse contexts and events. On hold and not available online at this time (due to small group discussion format and physical distancing requirements).

## **Psychosocial Disaster Learning Series**

The five chapters of this learning series will provide participants with a refresher to a disaster psychosocial approach known as Psychological First Aid (PFA). The goal of these online sessions is to provide a foundational review of knowledge about a disaster psychosocial approach, tailoring it to our local needs in Alberta. Each chapter is intended to help update your knowledge prior to being deployed in a disaster responder role. This program is NOT intended to replace PFA training, but is to be used as a pre-deployment refresher of the skills you learned during your original training.

### Chapter 1: Psychosocial Needs During a Disaster

#### Course Objectives:

- Understand what a disaster is

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- See disasters through a psychosocial context
- Explain a psychosocial approach to disaster response
- Understand the 5 elements of an effective psychosocial disaster response

## Chapter 2: PFA in Disaster Response

### Course Objectives:

- Understand the history and evolution of PFA
- Describe what PFA is
- Recognize when PFA should be used and who may benefit
- Identify best practices

## Chapter 3: The Four Principles of PFA

### Course Objectives:

- Explain the basic principles of PFA
- Understand the action principles of PFA
- Describe PFA best practices

## Chapter 4: Self-Care During a Disaster

### Course Objectives:

- List possible stress reactions and personal red flags
- Articulate ideas for supporting your self-care
- Identify ways to care for yourself and others

## Chapter 5: Principles in Action

### Course Objectives:

- Review three scenarios where PFA may be used in disaster response
- Test your PFA knowledge in an interactive and responsive environment
- Reflect on your PFA knowledge and ability to apply it to disaster response scenarios

To access the Psychosocial Disaster Learning Series, please visit:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page17072.aspx>.

## Self-Care in Disaster Times & Beyond Toolkit

This toolkit will be useful for helpers, first responders and leaders involved in disaster (including

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pandemic) and emergency response, as well as a range of crisis support work. It includes core content, workbooks, activities, resources, a comprehensive reference list and a guide to using these tools, focusing on both individual and organizational wellness. This resource is designed to increase your knowledge, skills and capacity for personal self-care, as well as for team and organizational self-care planning and practice, to support and sustain wellness through disaster and emergency work (and beyond)!

To request the personal or organizational package, email: [HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca](mailto:HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca).

## Wellness Exchange

Wellness Exchange is a resilience-building group curriculum and toolkit for professionals and para-professionals interested in teaching a series of evidence-informed skills that promote positive mental health and well-being. A skill building approach can be an effective means to help individuals cope with post-disaster stress and adversity. Some people will experience stress and difficulties that will continue weeks and months after an event, and for many people, an action-oriented and skill-building approach will be helpful for recovery.

Wellness exchange is modeled on the core principles of Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR) that was developed by the National Center for PTSD based in the United States. This group version of SPR was reviewed by primary SPR authors of and trainers from the National Center for PTSD in the U.S.A.

The curriculum for this five-part psycho-educational group was originally adapted by AHS Addiction & Mental Health professionals in the Calgary zone, in conjunction with community partners. SPR was originally designed to be used as a 1:1 individual approach to meet the needs of individuals recovering from a natural disaster. Wellness Exchange simply broadens the applicability of SPR to other times of stress and adversity and adds the group format. Wellness Exchange encourages self-reflection and teaches five main skills: problem solving, positive activities, managing reactions, helpful thinking, and healthy connections.

**Registration:** Please email: [AHSWellnessExchange@ahs.ca](mailto:AHSWellnessExchange@ahs.ca) to receive information regarding joining via Zoom and the handouts package.

## Zoom Registration for HeartMath Virtual Public Workshops: "Transform Your Stress: the Resilience Advantage - Strategies for Managing Stress in Challenging Times" (registration for up to 100 persons per session)

**Description** - Stress affects people physically, mentally and emotionally. Many Albertans have identified feeling stressed with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This introductory course includes a basic discussion of stress plus looks at different ways to manage stress, including 2 HeartMath breathing techniques.

### This interactive workshop will:

1. Discuss the stress response;
2. Identify warning signs of stress;
3. Help participants make an action plan to address their own stress;

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4. Review how emotions impact the body, brain, and overall health;
5. Demonstrate 2 practical stress-relieving breathing techniques;
6. Discuss how resilience can be enhanced through regular use of the breathing tools;

Registration information for this and other upcoming webinars can be obtained by emailing [AHS.HeartMath@ahs.ca](mailto:AHS.HeartMath@ahs.ca)

## Online Mental Health Resources:

For helpful advice on handling stressful situations and ways to talk to children.

- [Coping and Connection for Children & Families During COVID-19](#) (AHS)
- [COVID-19 and Your Mental Health](#) (AHS)
- [Practical and Emotional Preparedness for a Pandemic](#) (AHS)
- [Mental health and coping with COVID-19](#) (CDC)
- [Talking with children about COVID-19](#) (CDC)
- [Talking with children during infectious disease outbreaks](#) (SAMHSA)

To order free health promotion resources, visit: <https://dol.datacm.com/>

Login ID: mentalhealthresources

Password: mh2016

## Psychosocial Disaster Network (PDN) Newsletter

The PDN started as an interagency coordination committee for the 2013 Southern Alberta Flood recovery work. Our hope is to provide you with a centralized virtual hub for updates and resources for psychosocial preparedness and recovery. We have three overarching messages that help guide our newsletters: prepare to recover, communicate to coordinate, and strong communities save lives. If you would like to be added to the PDN email distribution list, email: [HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca](mailto:HPDIP.MH.EarlyID@ahs.ca).

## Emergency Preparedness (E-Prep)

The online webinar is currently in development.