

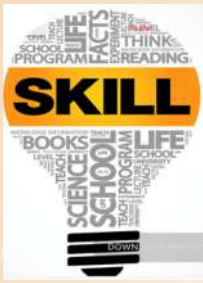


Chapter 1 - Group Psychological First Aid (Group-PFA)

- The therapeutic group setting offers a safe space for members to interact, communicate and develop relationships. In this context any modification of the group is interdependent with a change in the individual and vice versa. The network of communications which is developing within the group, facilitates the therapeutic process that is evolving in the group, by the group, for the group.

Foulkes, S.H. 1984. *"Therapeutic Group Analysis"*. London. Routledge.

- Group based interventions of PFA focus on reducing acute psychological distress through a compassionate, empathetic and supportive attitude
- The principles of psychological first aid refer to a non-intrusive pragmatic care, focus on listening without forcing conversations, assessing needs and ensuring that basic needs are fulfilled, encouraging relations with significant others and reassure protection from further harm. Either in natural or man-made or complex disasters, it is important to recognize the community as a source of support, safety and recovery. In a traumatized social context, group approach can facilitate field intervention



Chapter 1 - Group Psychological First Aid

Psychological First Aid includes:

- skills in active listening
- education about normal psychological responses to traumatic event
- understanding the importance of maintaining physical health
- understanding when to seek help from professional caregivers
- provision of information
- facilitation of access to continued care

The most relevant therapeutic factors that have been observed in group PFA intervention are:

- Increased sense of belonging (Group Cohesion)
- Interpersonal Learning through other group members
- Universality (learning that one's reactions were shared by others, recognizing similarity with others)
- Imparting Information
- Ventilating emotions (Catharsis)



Chapter 1 – Group Psychological First Aid

Through Group-PFA and your contribution as mental health workers, you can achieve:

- Limiting distress and negative health behavior
- Promotion of mental health
- Provision of comfort and support
- Interpersonal learning through other group members
- Expression of emotions
- Containing the emotional burden of the traumatic experience
- Feeling supported by the group
- Easing feelings of isolation, loneliness, helplessness and hopelessness
- Enhancement of Ego strength