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*Psychological First Aid for Sexual Violence Victims*

# What is Psychological First Aid (PFA)?

A compassionate, non-intrusive approach designed to support individuals in distress.

Aimed at helping people manage their emotions, stabilize, and begin their recovery.

Focuses on *providing support in the immediate aftermath* of trauma, such as sexual violence.

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# Importance of PFA for Sexual Violence Victims

Sexual violence is a traumatic event that can have long-term psychological effects

.Immediate support helps victims process the trauma and reduce the risk of developing severe mental health conditions like PTSD, anxiety, or depression.

PFA is essential for empowering victims and helping them regain a sense of safety and control.

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# Core Principles of Psychological First Aid

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**Safety and Comfort:**

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Ensure physical and emotional safety.

Provide a calm environment and reassure the individual they are safe.

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**Stabilization:**

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Help the individual stabilize by managing their emotions.

Offer coping strategies like deep breathing or grounding techniques.

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**Connection:**

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Offer support through empathetic listening.

Validate their feelings without judgment.

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**Information and Referral:**

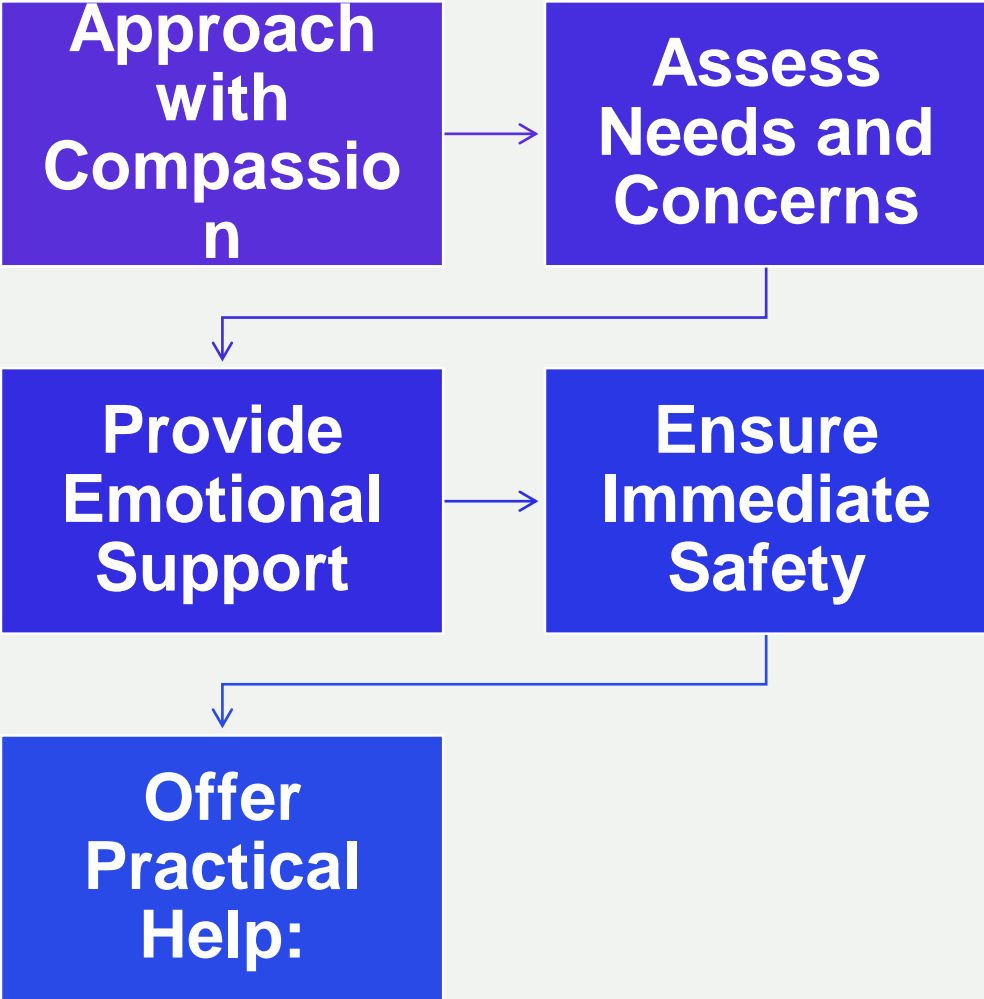
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Provide information about available resources (e.g., counseling, legal services, and medical support).

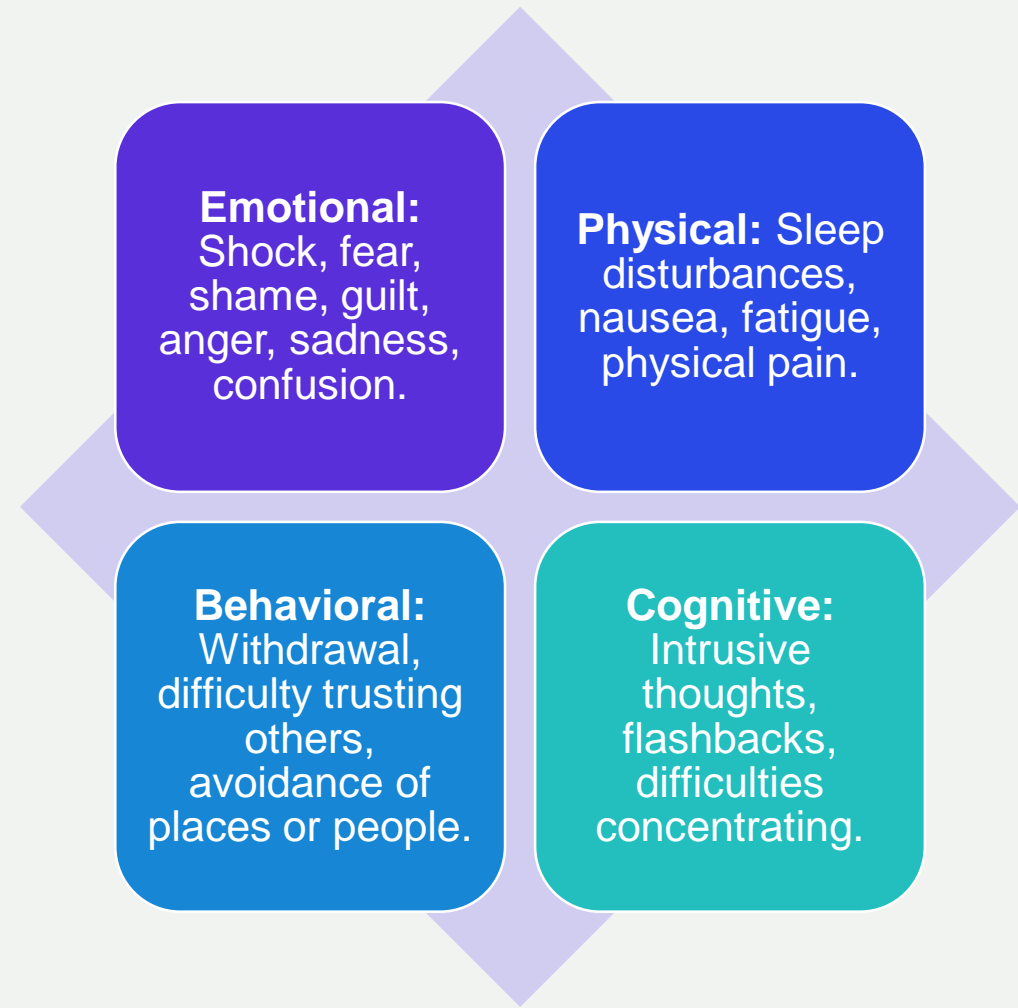
Refer them to professional help as needed.

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Key Steps in PFA  
for Sexual  
Violence Victims



# Common Reactions to Sexual Violence Trauma



# Dos and Don'ts in Providing PFA

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**Dos:**

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Stay calm and composed.

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Validate the survivor's feelings and experiences.

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Respect their personal space and boundaries.

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Encourage the survivor to express their feelings when they are ready.

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Provide clear information about available support.

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**Don'ts:**

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Do not judge or blame the survivor.

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Do not push for details about the assault.

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Do not promise confidentiality if there are concerns about immediate safety.

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Avoid giving advice unless specifically requested.

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## Slide 8: Trauma-Informed Care in PFA

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**Understanding Trauma:** Recognize the long-lasting effects of trauma on the brain and behavior.

02

**Empowerment:** Support victims in regaining control over their lives.

03

**Collaboration:** Work alongside other professionals (e.g., counselors, legal experts) to provide comprehensive care.

04

**Safety and Trustworthiness:** Build trust through consistent, empathetic support.

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# Resources for Sexual Violence Victims

## National Helplines:

- Provide contact information for 24/7 helplines.
- Local and international resources for crisis intervention.

## Healthcare and Legal Support:

- Encourage the victim to seek medical help (e.g., for a rape kit or trauma care).
- Legal support for filing reports or seeking protective orders.

## Counseling and Mental Health Services:

- Contact information for local counseling services, including sexual assault survivor support groups.

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# Long-Term Support and Recovery



**ONGOING MENTAL HEALTH CARE:**  
ENCOURAGE THE VICTIM TO CONTINUE  
THERAPY OR COUNSELING.



**SUPPORT GROUPS:** HIGHLIGHT THE VALUE OF  
PEER SUPPORT FROM OTHERS WHO HAVE  
EXPERIENCED SIMILAR TRAUMA.



**REBUILDING SENSE OF CONTROL:**  
ENCOURAGE THE INDIVIDUAL TO MAKE  
DECISIONS AT THEIR OWN PACE, INCLUDING  
DECISIONS ABOUT REPORTING, SEEKING  
HELP, AND PURSUING HEALING.

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# Conclusion

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Psychological First Aid is a critical intervention in the aftermath of sexual violence.

Offering compassion, safety, and practical support can make a significant difference in a survivor's recovery process.

Empowering victims with the right resources and information fosters resilience and healing.

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