

# PFA

A Quick Guide of What  
you Need to Know

1 Of 2 required  
MRC Trainings



## GO HEALTH MRC

Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health)  
Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)

# Psychological First Aid (PFA)

## Why Train in PFA?

- Disasters, emergencies, and personal crises can happen at any time. During times of great stress, personal interactions will have great impact.
- PFA is a framework for interacting with others at times of crisis or trauma so our impacts can be more positive. It is less of a specific intervention than a supportive attitude that can underlie all of your interactions.
- It is a practical, evidence-based approach meant to reduce symptoms of stress in others, and assist in their healthy resilience and/or recovery

## Key Elements of Psychological First Aid

- **Who can PFA help?** PFA can be used to help anyone: Older adults, households, individuals, disaster survivors, and professional responders
- **Who can use PFA?** PFA strategies can be used by everyone, including non-mental health providers, to assist with immediate needs of mental health duress
- **Where and When is PFA used?** PFA can be used anywhere and anytime, including during disasters, everyday emergencies, or personal crises



## PFA is Not:

- Debriefing, counseling or treatment
- Professional help, nor replacement for professional help
- Meant to fix every problem in a person's life, only needs generated by the disaster or traumatic experience

**It is essential to recognize the limits of PFA and understand when to refer someone for professional mental healthcare!**

## Additional PFA Resources:

- Johns Hopkins Coursera for Psychological First Aid Training (free course with paid exam for certificate): <https://www.coursera.org/learn/psychological-first-aid>
- Office of Mental Health - Mental Health During a Disaster or Emergency resources: [https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster\\_resources/](https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/disaster_resources/)

## How to complete PFA Training for MRC:

To take this course, you will need a New York State (NYS) Learning Management System (LMS) account.

1. Follow this link to “OHEP- 560 -Psychological First Aid”  
<https://bit.ly/4gcBUOe>
2. Log-in or create an account, and enroll in the course.
3. Click “My Courses”, and launch the course.
4. After completing the training, return to “My Courses”. Use the drop down menu in the top right to select “My Completed Courses”. Complete the Course evaluation and view your certificate.
5. Email the certificate to [GOHealthMRC@orleanscountyny.gov](mailto:GOHealthMRC@orleanscountyny.gov)



## Key Elements of Psychological First Aid

These elements serve as a model for you to provide PFA. PFA is not a process, but a toolkit of components to be used as needed, in any order appropriate.

Providing comfort/calming care

Recognizing basic needs and helping to solve problems

Validating feelings and thoughts for someone in distress

Connecting with personal and professional support systems

Providing accurate and timely information

Providing education about stress reactions

Reinforcing positive coping strategies and personal strengths

For any questions, email: [GOHealthMRC@orleanscountyny.gov](mailto:GOHealthMRC@orleanscountyny.gov)

For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/GOPrepared>