



# Psychological First Aid (PFA)

**General Guidelines for Addressing Mental Health Needs in the School Environment**  
PFA is an evidence-informed approach for assisting children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of a critical incident, disaster, or terrorism. PFA is designed to reduce the initial distress caused by traumatic events and to foster short and long-term adaptive functioning.

## Responding to Bullying, Cyber Bullying or Hazing

### 1 LISTEN to what they say and how they act.

- Talk with your students.
- Listen to what your students say and how they act.
- Explain to your students that if someone they know is being bullied, it is important not to walk away from the situation. Sometimes targets of bullying, cyberbullying or hazing, are too scared to get the right help.
- Be there for those students who need help and let other students know the importance of telling a staff member if they become aware of bullying, cyberbullying or hazing.

### 2 PROTECT by maintaining structure, stability, and consistency.

- Intervene immediately with any act of bullying, cyber bullying or hazing.
- If a student is being bullied, help him/her explore ways to stay safe, such as by hanging out in an area where there are adults supervising, or avoiding walking home alone.
- *Note: Report all bullying, cyber bullying or hazing incidents directly to the school administrator or the school complaint manager.*



- Remind students to keep telling adults, until someone listens and does something to address the issue.

### 4 MODEL calm and optimistic behavior.

- Students frequently watch adults' interactions with other students, and their reactions in the midst of crisis. Adults fail to protect students when they witness an act of bullying and ignore it.
- Lead by example; model advocacy and the protection of students by intervening appropriately, correcting behavior, and seeking the proper support for all parties involved.

### 5 TEACH about normal stress symptoms and how to cope.

- Teach students and staff about the consequences of bullying, cyber bullying or hazing.
- Inform your students about appropriate online behavior, and teach them to avoid cyber bullying.
- Teach students help seeking behaviors and talk to them about what they can say or do when they become aware of bullying, cyber bullying or hazing.
- Help students identify trusted adults at school and at home whom they can go to for support.
- Be aware of the policies and the laws related to bullying, cyber bullying or hazing so that students understand the legal ramifications of their actions.

### 3 CONNECT through interaction, activities and resources.

- Explain to your students that if someone they know is being bullied, it is OK to ask for help. Explain that they are not "snitching" on others by saying something to an adult; they are helping to protect themselves and the people they know.

