



What is Caring for Yourself using Psychological First Aid?

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is about taking care of you—your thoughts, feelings and emotions when you have experienced stress, crisis or trauma—and then being there for family, friends and community when they are having difficulty coping.

Look, Listen, Link, Live Model

This is the model we use to care for ourselves and to care for others in times of stress, crisis or trauma.

LOOK – understanding what stress and grief looks like in yourself and others.

LISTEN – being able to hear the warning signs in yourself and others.

LINK – getting support for yourself and others.

LIVE – being able to face the next day and beyond.

Care for Self

Understanding and taking care of yourself is a critical part of providing PFA. It is difficult to support someone else if you are not taking care of yourself.

We all experience stress. Stress is not bad if we take care of it. There are different types of stress:

- Daily stress
- Cumulative Stress (it builds up)
- Secondary/Vicarious Stress (where you are being impacted by what you are seeing and hearing)
- Traumatic Stress (something big happens that causes a big impact)

What are your day-to-day stresses?

Have you ever experienced secondary/vicarious stress? If so, what caused it?



Our first step is to LOOK:

LOOK – Look for common signs that indicate stress:

- Stomach-aches, headaches, tiredness
- Difficulty thinking/concentrating
- Anxiety, frustration, lots of emotions
- Increased use of alcohol and drugs, recklessness, violent behaviours
- Withdrawal from friends and family, from conversations

How do you recognize when you are stressed? What do you look like? How do you act and feel?

Stress Assessment

Day-to-Day Stress Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Do you frequently do any of the following? Choose all that apply.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't eat well | <input type="checkbox"/> Have few supportive relationships |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Try to do everything yourself | <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect sleep or rest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger easily | <input type="checkbox"/> Become angry for small things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set unrealistic goals | <input type="checkbox"/> Ignore signs of stress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not laugh in situations others find funny | <input type="checkbox"/> Procrastinate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Become easily irritated | <input type="checkbox"/> Think there is only one right way to do something |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make a "big deal" of things | <input type="checkbox"/> Not relaxing a little every day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complain you are disorganized | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend a lot of time complaining about the past |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't take care of your emotions | <input type="checkbox"/> Race through the day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neglect exercise | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel unable to cope with all you have to do |

TOTAL: _____

RESULTS:

1 – 6 = Your basic stress level is low and easily managed.

7 – 12 = You have good stress level management on a day-to-day basis.

13 – 17 = Your basic stress is high and above a comfortable level.

18+ = You have enough factors to put you in distress and should seek help.



The next step is to LISTEN

LISTEN – Listen to how you are feeling:

- Am I easily irritated by other people?
- Am I having trouble concentrating at work?
- Am I finding it hard to connect with friends and family?
- Do I need to reach out for support?

Then you LINK

LINK – Link to support systems in place to help cope with stress:

- What actions do you take to cope with stress? (listen to music, go out on the land)
- Healthy relationships with family, friends, Elders and/or work colleagues
- Community services or helplines
- Cultural traditions

Who are the people/organizations/help lines that you link to for support? List their names and contact information below.

The last step is to LIVE

LIVE – Live and move forward with healthy ways to deal with stress.

- Taking breaks
- Breathing and mindfulness
- Maintaining healthy habits (eating, sleeping, exercising)
- Spending time on the land
- Practicing cultural traditions
- Maintaining healthy relationships
- Asking for help if you need it

What are three healthy coping strategies that you use to calm yourself after a stressful situation?

Self-care is so important if we want to help others!