Human Services

Client Name

University Name

**Psychological first aid**

Psychological first aid is a unique Canadian Red Cross program aimed to help oneself and others build resiliency and learn to cope with day-to-day and long-term stresses, trauma, loss, and grief. Research has indicated that psychological first aid immediately after a disaster can be helpful, but only if we allow the people who have been victim to the traumas to take the lead. Some people need to talk about their feelings, some people need help with practical coping, some people need to be left alone. The best help usually comes from being with other survivors who are not there in a “helping” role, but who act as empathetic individuals who put themselves in the shoes of the sufferer. Doing so helps them build and establish rapport between them and the survivor of the trauma. As a provider of Psychological first aid, one would need to be available, but not intrusive. They would also need to respond to the sufferer’s immediate needs, whatever they may be, in whatever way we can, without trying to take charge and impose their “solutions” on others. For instance, the victims of psychological trauma may need a blanket or may sometimes need a hand to hold. Any person in the role of psychological first aid provider needs to respect and address their needs to console them fully and realize that talking isn't always the best response. In fact, they need to be able to respect each victim’s silence as a way for them to trust them and to be able to find their voice to express their concerns.

The benefits of seeing a psychological first aid provider is that the trauma affected individuals don’t have to be alone in their journey of discovery and healing. The sheer opportunity of telling someone about their sufferings and having them identify with their struggles could help traumatized people drastically. For instance, Dan is an individual who has fought valiantly in the war against terror in Iraq and has now returned to his homeland. He has difficulty adjusting to the new lifestyle as the war events have deeply traumatized him, causing immense difficulty in him sleeping or even breathing at time. Seeing a psychological first aid provider in this case would benefit him because of the various techniques and therapeutic modalities that could be used by the provider which would be difficult for him to have accessed on my own. In the process, the time of the psychological first aid provider would be totally devoted to Dan during that time span. The provider would help him find peace and calmness by identifying the potential causes for his fear of safety and then consoling him. As he finds solace with the aid provider, Dan would forward to the next opportunity to discuss what was happening in his life and get good feedback on how to handle choices and conversations. The psychological first aid provider could also offer a spotlight on the areas of any traumatized person’s life that one might find difficult or challenging on their own. In the process, the people would know that they are respected and seen as an expert on their lives but just want some more support and information to cope up with the trauma they endured. The potential benefits of such a provision of psychological first aid include improved self-esteem, increased ability for empathy, freeing of inhibitions relief from suffering and reduction of symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Lastly, an effective psychological first aid service for me is by someone who listens well and can read between the lines and ask for clarification. They are supportive in one’s goals. They offer insight in the patterns that one is perhaps unconsciously revealing.

References

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