

# **MANUAL FOR FACILITATORS**

## MANUAL FOR FACILITATORS

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## Acknowledgement

### Content Development

**Ms. Surabhika Maheshwari**

*Psychologist*

*Lecturer in Psychology, Indraprastha College for Women*

*University of Delhi*

*surabhika@gmail.com*

**Dr. Cherian Varghese**

*National Professional Officer (Non Communicable Diseases and Mental Health)*

*WHO Representative to India*

*New Delhi*

**Dr. Kavita Venkataraman**

*National Consultant (NMH )*

*WHO Representative to India*

*New Delhi*

### Reviewed by

**Dr. Vijaya Chandra, SEARO**

*Regional Advisor (Health and Behaviour)*

*WHO Regional Office, New Delhi*

### Layout and design

**Ms. Ivy D'Souza**

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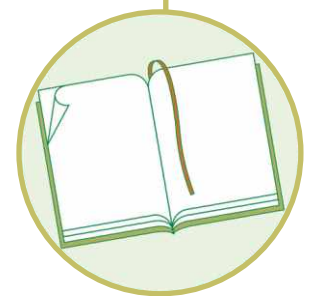
# Why?

## The purpose of the manual

This manual has been designed keeping in mind the importance of psychosocial support during and after a disaster.

This manual is essentially a training guide for facilitators. It has been made in a simple, easily understandable format to facilitate wider access and applicability. Technical jargon has been avoided. Though specialist professional support is the best, but due to various physical constraints of time, distance, and importantly the scarcity of available professional resource it is imperative to guide the volunteering facilitators to provide the basic training to volunteers (service providers in the field) in such situations.

The manual is a guide to providing psychosocial first aid in disaster situations.



# Who?

## For the facilitator and the trainees

This manual is a guide for training service providers who will go in the field and be actively involved with the people affected.

The volunteers (service providers) could include:

- The Community Level worker.
- Teachers, Social workers, Nurses, Any willing adult

The manual can be used by the facilitators for a brief orientation and training of these volunteers. The facilitator could be someone with :

- Good communication skills
- An understanding of the material provided
- Conversant and comfortable with the various concepts in the manual.
- A nurse/ teacher/ social worker can be a good resource.

The facilitator should go through the manual before starting the training.

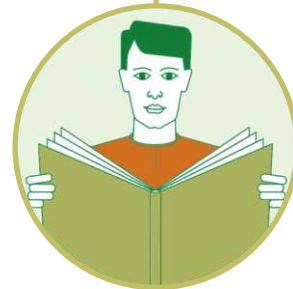
The training program is divided in five sessions. Activities form a part of the sessions and are included to encourage reflection and group participation.

Group Size of one batch of trainees (under one facilitator): 8 - 20

Time: 4 - 6 hours

Materials required: nothing mandatory, a board/chart paper could enhance presentation and understanding.

The manual can be adapted according to the specific disaster situation, background of volunteers and any other situational demands.



### NOTE TO FACILITATOR

*The form of the manual is as addressed to the trainees.*

# How?

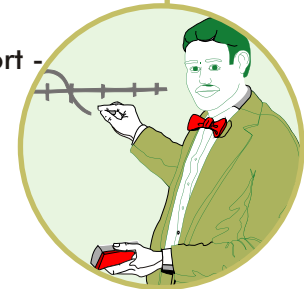
## Training Session Layout

**For a One-day training workshop**  
(9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

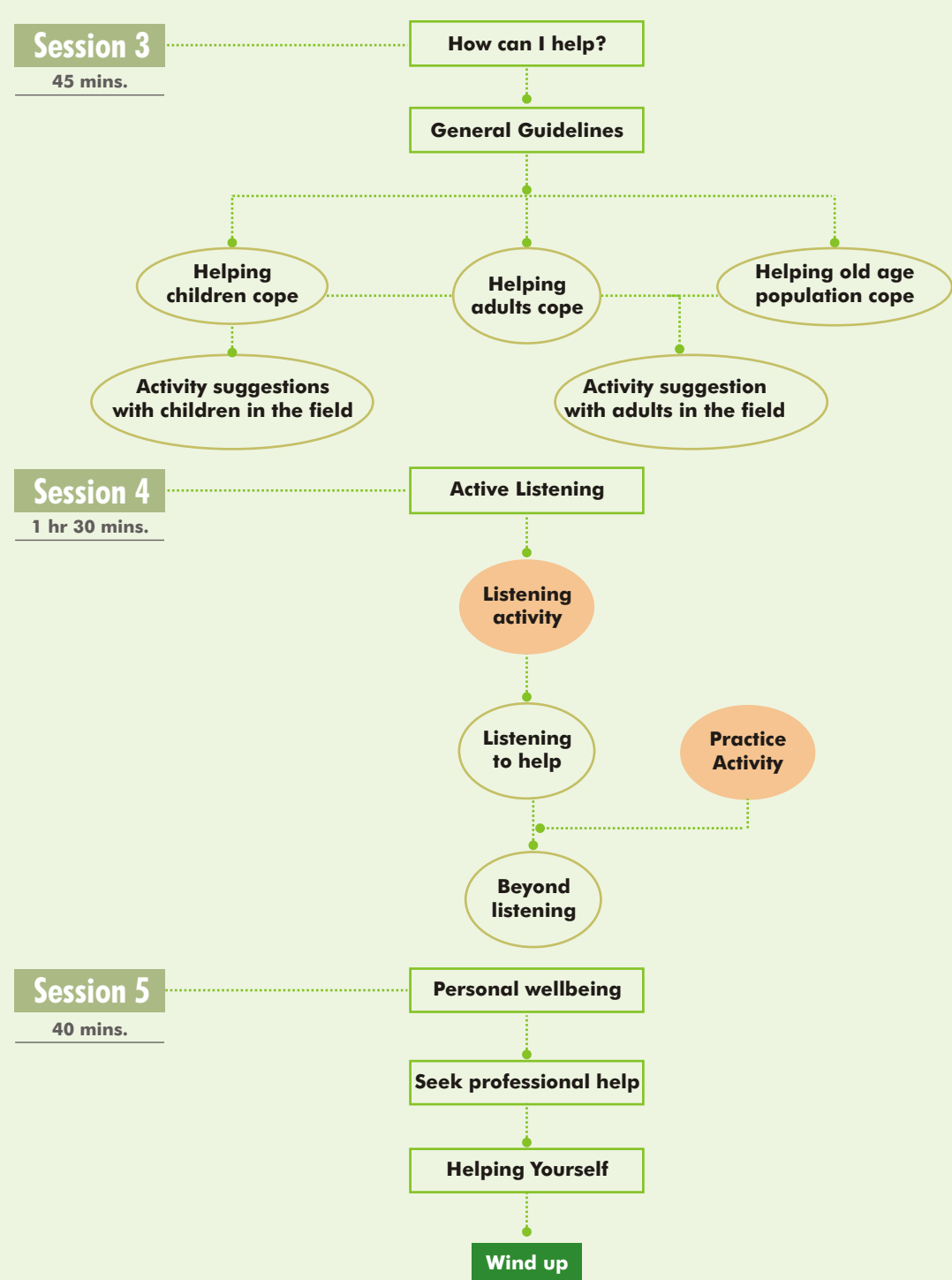
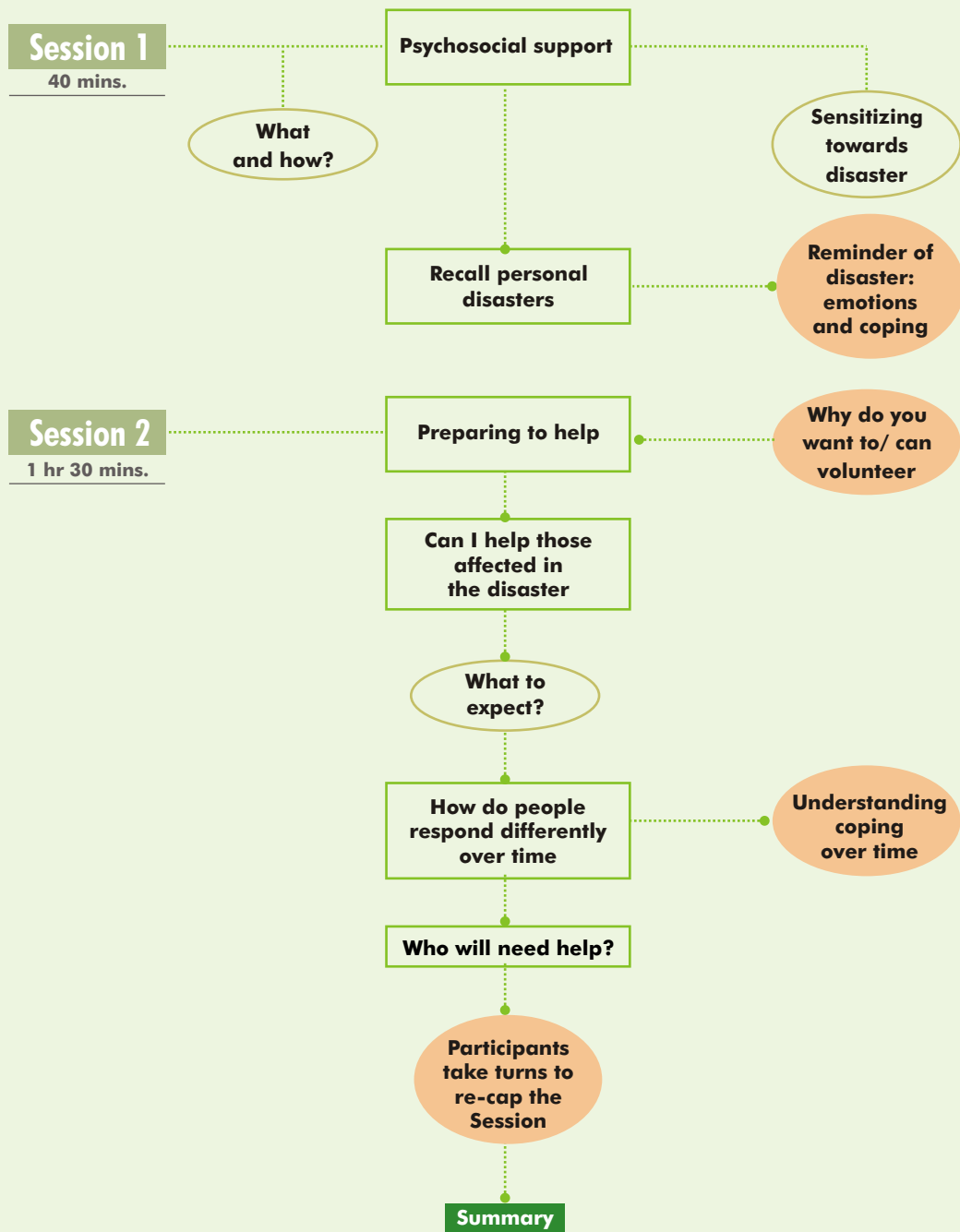
- 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. : Registration
- Session 1** : Psychological Support - Introduction and Sensitization
- 10:30 - 10:45 : Break
- 10:45 - 12:15 : **Session 2** : Preparing to Help
- 12:15 - 1:00 p.m. : **Session 3** : How can I Help?
- 1:00 - 2:00 : Lunch Break
- 2:00 - 3:30 : **Session 4** : Active Listening
- 3:30 - 4:15 : **Session 5** : Personal Wellbeing
- 4:15... : Tea and Informal Exchange

**For Half-day Training Workshop**  
(9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.)

- 9:00 - 9:40 a.m. : **Session 1** : Psychological Support - Introduction and Sensitization
- 9:40 - 11:10 : **Session 2** : Preparing to Help
- 11:10 - 11:50 : **Session 3** : How Can I Help?
- 11:50 - 12:10 p.m. : Break
- 12:10 - 1:40 : **Session 4** : Active Listening
- 1:40 - 2:30 : **Session 5** : Personal Wellbeing
- 2:30... : Tea and Informal Exchange



# The structure and contents of the manual



Session

1

## Psychological Support - Introduction & Sensitization

In most emergency situations involving people our attention first goes to “the body”. How many have died? How many are injured? What about food, clothing and shelter? Most help addresses these aspects. In addition to all the well meaning and much required physical help, we must remember **what effects the body, affects the mind too.**

The psychological distress caused, needs as much help and attention. Psychological and social interventions go hand in hand. Providing psychosocial support in disaster situation aims at:

- Helping people deal with difficult feelings in difficult times.
- Helping people cope with losses.
- Assisting people in adjusting to their environment and other survivors.

### Sensitizing towards the disaster situation

Disasters are unfortunate, unforeseen situations which usually catch us off-guard. Predicting or controlling disasters is rarely ever in our hands. What we **CAN** do is to **MANAGE** a disaster situation in the best possible manner.

- Disasters are events on which we have little or no control.
- Such situations bring with them an acute feeling of helplessness.
- We face small 'disasters' in our day to day lives, e.g. spilling tea on important papers, road accidents.
- We employ available resources and our support system to deal with these everyday 'disaster' situations.
- In a disaster like flood, tsunami, earthquake etc, where a large community is involved the traditional coping resources are challenged.
- Thus the need for providing external support, material, social and psychological.

Disasters can be sudden and overwhelming. In addition to the often catastrophic toll on lives and property, a disaster like a tsunami, earthquake or fire, also brings a flood of emotional reactions. How people deal with these emotional reactions may effect their recovery afterwards.

### ACTIVITY TIP 1

#### Share to Care

#### Group activity

Ask participants to share their experiences with the group

Duration : **20** minutes

### AIM

Ice-breaker, reminder of personal disasters, a hope that they are manageable, recovery of emotional reactions and coping mechanisms.



### ACTIVITY

(Ask the group to) Recall personal disasters. Any day-to-day situation such as electricity going off before a big dinner, a car accident etc. can also be included.

Elaborate

- What you felt?, and
- How you coped?

Write responses on a board or chart paper that can be viewed by the entire group. Put the responses of the group under

1. Emotional Reactions and
2. Coping - include how they dealt with the disaster.

# Session

# 2

## Preparing to Help

### Can I help those affected in the disaster?

Yes, you can. Infact, you could be an important support. Before taking this difficult and taxing decision, be certain that you can handle the pressures involved.

#### NOTE TO FACILITATOR

Facilitate understanding and self exploration of the participants through the following activity. Run the trainees through the enabling response checklist (at least three out of the five statements should be answered 'yes!')

#### ACTIVITY TIP 2

#### Exploration within

#### Group activity

Ask participants to share their experiences with the group

Duration : 15-20 minutes

### AIM

To facilitate self exploration, foster responsibility and address any anxieties about personal capacities. This activity will also help you assess the group, and help them be confident about their capacity as volunteers.



### ACTIVITY

Mobilize the group in answering the question

- What is it that makes you feel you WANT to and you CAN be a volunteer and support people who are affected by the disaster?

Write the responses on a board or chart paper that can be viewed by the entire group.

### Enabling Responses Include

- I have been able to deal fairly well with my personal losses. I am not thinking about the losses that I have faced all the time.
- I am fairly patient. I can listen to what the survivors may want to share.
- My communication skills are good.
- I am sensitive to others' pain.
- I am emotionally strong and can deal with survivors' distress.

## What to expect?

It is common for people who have experienced traumatic situations to have **very strong emotional reactions**. Understanding normal responses to these abnormal events can aid you in coping with feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, and help you along the path to recovery.

**Shock** and **denial** are typical responses to large-scale natural disasters, especially shortly after the event. Both shock and denial are normal, protective reactions.

Shock is a sudden and often intense disturbance of the emotional state that may leave one feeling stunned or dazed. Denial involves not acknowledging that something very stressful has happened, or not experiencing fully the intensity of the event. The person may temporarily feel numb or disconnected.

As the initial shock subsides, reactions vary from one person to another. Many people survive disasters without developing significant psychological symptoms. Others, however, may have a difficult time "getting over it." Survivors of trauma have reported a wide range of psychological problems, including

- Feeling low,
- Alcohol and drug abuse,
- Lingering symptoms of fear and anxiety

All of these reactions make it hard to work or go to school, cause family stress, and marital conflicts.

## The following are normal responses to a traumatic event

- **Feelings** become intense and sometimes are unpredictable. Moods become more irritable than usual, and you're likely to see the mood change back and forth dramatically. You will come across people who are especially anxious or nervous or even depressed.
- **Thoughts** and behavior patterns are affected by the trauma. Repeated and vivid memories of the event are common. These flashbacks may occur for no apparent reason and may lead to physical reactions such as rapid heartbeat or sweating. People may find it difficult to concentrate or make decisions, or become more

easily confused. Sleep and eating patterns also may be disrupted.

- **Recurring emotional reactions** are common. Anniversaries of the event, such as at one month or one year, as well as reminders such as aftershocks from earthquakes or the sounds of sirens, can trigger upsetting memories of the traumatic experience. These 'triggers' may be accompanied by fears that the stressful event will be repeated.
- **Interpersonal relationships** often become strained. Greater conflict, such as more frequent arguments with family members and coworkers, is common. On the other hand, there could be people who are withdrawn and isolated, and who avoid usual activities.
- **Physical symptoms** may accompany the extreme stress. For example, headaches, nausea and chest pain may result and may require medical attention. Pre-existing medical conditions may worsen due to the stress.
- **Survivors' Guilt** Many survivors question why they survived and someone else perished, particularly when their survival seems to have more to do with coincidence or luck than some conscious choice. This reaction is called "survivor guilt" and it is a very normal response to a traumatic event. It is difficult for human beings to feel grateful for being alive, while at the same time feeling intense sorrow for those who did not survive.

## How do people respond differently over time?

It is important for you to realize that there is not one 'standard' pattern of reaction to the extreme stress of traumatic experiences. Some people respond immediately, while others have delayed reactions - sometimes months or even years later. Some have adverse effects for a long period of time, while others recover rather quickly. Remember that a disaster is an abnormal situation, warranting abnormal reactions and additionally our usual coping mechanisms and support systems have been adversely affected.

Reactions can change over time. Some who have suffered from trauma are energized initially by the event to help them with the challenge of coping, only to later become discouraged or depressed.

### ACTIVITY TIP 3

#### Back n Forth...

#### Group activity

Ask participants to share their experiences with the group

Duration : **10-15** minutes

## AIM

Enable trainees to look into their own coping mechanisms and understand coping over time.

## ACTIVITY

While going over this section keep the reactions gathered from activity 1 fresh in the participants' minds. Remind them of their reactions. Put the list of reactions that was made during Activity 1 in front of the participants. Ask them to remember how they dealt with the event when it occurred and how they respond to it today. If possible break it into, reactions (including feelings, thoughts, memories and behavior):

- immediately after
- after a couple of days
- after a month
- after a year
- now

Highlight the fact that reactions change from the immediate reactions to a disaster situation to when we look back after many months or years.



## Expected Reactions Over Time

### 1 Immediate reactions 24 hrs

Tension, panic, anxiety

Denial, shock

Survivors' Guilt

Restlessness, confusion

Happiness at having survived

Crying, feeling helpless

### 2 After a couple of weeks

Fear, hyper - alert

Worried

'Flashbacks'

Weeping, guilt

Sadness

Positive reactions

Acceptance

Future hope

### 3 After a month/ two

Panic, restlessness

Pessimistic thoughts

Anxiety

Positive reactions

Routine estb.

Working towards future

### NOTE TO FACILITATOR

All of these reactions are expected and form a part of an individual's natural reaction to a terrible disaster. Accept and try to understand these reactions.

## Who will need help?

No one who sees a disaster is untouched by it. All the people affected, need help to recover from the disaster. Helping people to come to terms with the disaster and normalizing the impact are the key aspects. Pay special attention to:

- People having symptoms/ problems like restlessness, panic, sleep disturbances, nightmares, frequent recollection of traumatic events and frequent crying.
- The ones who are seen to remain isolated/ withdrawn most of the time and show no overt interest in the activities going on around them.
- Individuals showing reluctance to communicate when approached.
- People who have significant losses (like death of family members).

### ACTIVITY TIP 4

#### Summarization

#### Group activity

Participants interact in the group

## AIM

Summarization, Facilitate discussion and clarification of any doubts. The participants should be sensitized towards -

- Disaster situations and the reactions evoked.
- One's own capacities for providing support.
- Expected reactions of the affected community.
- People who would need special attention in the affected community.

Duration : 10 minutes



## ACTIVITY

You can ask each person to summarize and present a small section. Encourage interactive participation; the group is free to add anything that the presenter missed out on.

## Session

# 3

## How can I help?

Offering psychological support to disaster affected individuals is not a one time activity. Understand it as an emotional contract, a continuous and time taking activity. It can be understood as being friends with individuals to help them cope with their losses.

### NOTE TO FACILITATORS

The following section discusses the various ways in which the trainees can help the disaster affected population. The first four tips are a general guideline in providing psychosocial support.

While going over this section remember to make the session interactive and let the trainees act out/ give examples for the ways help can be rendered.

## General Guidelines

- Provide **practical help** in dealing with the disaster. Help friends or family pack or clean up. Help with arranging the meals. Store belongings or provide a place to stay. Parents may be very busy; offer to spend some time with children to play and to listen to their concerns. Offer specific types of help or ask how you can help.
- **Listen.** One of the best ways you can help is to just listen. You don't have to come up with solutions or answers. It's okay if someone breaks down and cries. Others will ask "Why me?" They are not really looking for an answer but expressing their hurt. (refer : session on Active listening. Pg. 23)
- **Show** by words and actions that you care. Go ahead and act. Don't be afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing. A friendly arm around troubled shoulders or a few words of support and encouragement can help in times of crisis. Small, kind deeds and sincere expressions of affection or admiration also will mean a lot.
- **Keep helping.** The disruptions caused by the disaster may continue for some time. Recovering may take even longer. Survivors will need regular, small acts of kindness to maintain their morale and to put their lives back together.

## When helping a child...

The intense anxiety and fear that often follow a disaster can be especially troubling for surviving children, especially if other children were victims of the disaster. Some may demonstrate younger behaviors such as thumb sucking or bed wetting. Children may be more prone to nightmares and fear of sleeping alone. Performance in school may suffer. Other changes in behavior patterns may include throwing tantrums more frequently, or withdrawing.

After a disaster, children typically feel confusion and fear.

Children often experience confusion & fear.

## DO NOT

- *Push the disaster affected individuals to conform to your way of going about things... try to be a part of their distress.*
- *Force them to "do" things or "talk"*

## Confusion:

- What happened?
- How did it happen?

## Fear:

- The event will happen again.
- Someone will be injured or killed.
- They will be separated from the family.
- They will be left alone.

There are several things parents, care givers, and you as a volunteer can do to help reduce the emotional consequences of trauma, including the following:

- Ensure the child is safe and is being looked after by a caring and responsible adult.
- Children cope best in their natural environment. As far as possible do not institutionalize or adopt the child out.
- Be sensitive to knowing that a child often finds a toy / object / photograph comforting and that they may choose to wear or carry it around with them constantly.
- Ensure regular monitoring of children who have been orphaned; check where they sleep; what their activities have been during the day and whether they feel safe.
- Provide resources for children to play with, to occupy themselves or to express themselves through.
- Arrange informal gatherings for children at places close to their families or new home-bases so that children have the opportunity to play and talk together.
- Listen to children's stories. Often children are more comfortable expressing their feelings and experiences through make-believe stories or by using objects.
- Encourage young people to take up a useful role of their choice, to help in the healing process

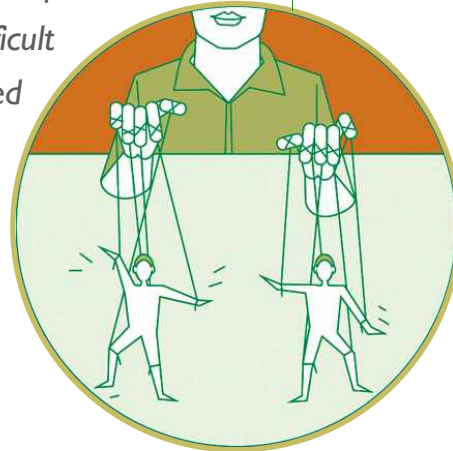
## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS WITH CHILDREN

1. **Facilitate expression :** Children can find it difficult to express emotions and difficult feelings. Various mediums can be used to help children feel less vulnerable and safer

- Drawing
- Writing
- Group Discussions
- Use puppets and stories

2. **Goal oriented activity:** such activities help foster confidence and directed behavior

- Collage making
- Small repairs



## When helping an adult.....

- Allow crying and sharing of grief.
- Crying, feeling helpless, vulnerable and sad are normal responses to loss. Being able to mourn losses and sharing the feeling of loss helps ease out the grief reaction.
- Encourage the establishment of social support groups (religious groups, work communities). Get people to interact with groups and communities with which they feel safe and understood.
- Facilitate going back to the normal daily routine activities. Even if it is difficult to re-establish routines as before try to structure some daily activities. Start with simple activities such as time of sleep and waking up, meal times etc.
- Educate (information about the disaster, caring for oneself and the community, health practices, reconstruction)
- Encourage gainful employment in reconstructive tasks. This fosters a feeling of control and hope .
- Discourage the spreading of any rumours.
- Facilitate sharing of some community responsibilities by adults.

## When helping the old-age population.....

Do not neglect the aging survivors. They too are in a very vulnerable position, both physically and emotionally. Try to bring them together with the community and help ease out their fears.

- Ensure medical aid and physical well being.
- Guard against extreme feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.
- Encourage healthy grief reactions, such as crying, talking about their losses.
- Allow elders to talk about their fears, anxieties and guilt.
- Encourage group meetings with other elderly survivors.
- Encourage participation in community decision making.

## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS WITH ADULTS

- **Group Mourning:** let people come together in groups and mourn the losses as a community.
- **Group Discussion:** open communication and encourage people to talk and express their pain and loss in group setting. This will help build solidarity and lessen the feeling of 'I am the only sufferer'.
- **Cultural community activities:** such as folk songs, participation in community activities etc.
- **Relaxation and Exercises.**



Session

4

Active Listening

Active listening is different from the simple response of hearing. We hear all that our ears can pick up. When listening actively, we focus all our attention to the material and in addition also to the various aspects of the body language that are being expressed by the speaker. For example, we should be able to pick up that the speaker is distressed and very sad, by what he is telling us, and also by the manner in which it is told.

Give an ear ...

**Group activity**  
Organize people in pairs

Duration : **25** minutes

## AIM

- Sensitization towards the difficulty in sharing personal emotional information with another person, most likely a stranger.
- Reflection of personal skills. (Can be used as the base for polishing certain deficient skills in a particular participant. E.g. if someone is interfering too much while listening, bring it to their notice, and work on correcting it.)
- An understanding of what works: Ask people to answer what about the other person, made you comfortable? Or, why did you feel that you were being



## ACTIVITY

Organize people in pairs. Ask each participant to talk about any difficult and/ or emotional life event with their partner. The participants take turns to be the speaker and the listener. Give 10 minutes each. Then ask the group to share how each one felt when they were sharing, when they were the speaker.

The participants should share:

- How they felt when they were talking?
- Were their emotions and feelings understood?
- Did they feel like sharing their feelings?
- Did they feel understood?

Let each participant share this information with the entire group.

Proceed with the module and ask the participants to be alert to the mistakes they made, and how they could enhance their listening skills.

## Begin With Listening

Effective helping begins with good listening. Good listening means really understanding what the other person is saying.

### To listen better.....

- **Listen carefully and completely.** You must tune in and pay attention to the person talking. If you aren't paying attention to the speaker, you're missing information
- **Be non-judgmental.** You can't be involved in judging and still hear the whole story. Withhold judgmental statements.
- **Keep an open mind.** When your mind closes, your ears do, too. Don't tune out things that you don't agree with.
- **Do not jump to conclusions.** Listening involves entering into the other persons' frame of reference, not being caught up in your own assumptions.
- **Do not interrupt frequently.** While listening, don't stop the speaker too many times or ask a lot of questions. Let the person talk at his/ her own pace.
- **Do not laugh at or ridicule the speaker.**

## Listening to Help: Active Listening

Active listening is an understanding response which encourages the other person to talk or continue talking. It helps you establish a helping relationship, gain information and understand what the other person is experiencing. It fosters a trusting relationship. Active listening helps the speaker feel accepted and understood.

Here are several ways to demonstrate that you are actively listening:

- **Acknowledging** what the speaker says by saying "Mm Hm" or nodding. These simple responses say "I'm hearing you."

- **Making eye contact.** Look the speaker in the eye. Focus your attention on this person without trying to do some other activity while listening. True, you may be able to do a task and hear what is said, but the speaker will feel unimportant, not heard, and discouraged.
- **Leaning forward.** This body gesture says "I'm interested."
- **Using Silence.** Silence can be a powerful way to communicate acceptance and encouragement. It can say "You are important to me. I'm willing to wait as you gather your thoughts. I can let you say what you're thinking in your own way." You communicate impatience when you interrupt, do too much prodding or finish others sentences when they falter. That's a sure way to hinder a relationship.
- **Use open-ended questions.** Ask a question that cannot be answered by "yes" or "no" to get more information or help the speaker begin sharing with you. Do not question excessively.
- **Paraphrasing.** Without interrupting, restate what has been said in your own words. If you have misunderstood, the speaker can give more correct information. For example:

**Speaker:** "My son tells me I should sell my property here now and move in with them. They say they'll take care of everything."

**Listener:** "Your son wants to take care of you now."

- **Reflect feelings.** Without interrupting, respond to or give a name to the feelings you hear in what the other person says or does. This not only furthers the conversation, but gives you and the speaker insight into emotional issues that might be hiding behind words. Example:

**Speaker:** "My son tells me I should sell my house now and move in with them. They say they'll take care of everything."

**Listener:** "You're not sure you want to do that." Or, "Does that feel scary (or like giving up)?"

**ACTIVITY TIP 5**

**Get better...**

Group activity

Duration : **15-20** minutes

**AIM**

*Practice the skills that you have learnt*

**ACTIVITY**

*Let two people come from the group. One becomes the speaker and the other the listener. The group observes the interaction and then makes comments on the use of the skills. Note mistakes and positive actions.*



**Beyond Listening**

As you listen and learn more about the speakers' situation, you may want to help. A good place to begin is by offering **supportive statements**. Respond to the speaker with a touch or a comment that offers encouragement or acceptance of the speakers' thoughts, ideas and feelings.

For example, the speaker may confide "I feel very scared to go out in the sea!" Your reply can help the person feel that he or she is not alone: "I certainly understand why you feel that way. I think it's normal."

Occasionally, you may need to confront the speaker with the contradiction you see between words and behavior. **Interpreting the situation** can help him or her face unexpressed feelings.

For example, the speaker may be telling you how pleased she is that her situation is working out a particular way. But all the while, you notice how she looks sad and dejected. Your reply of "You're telling me how happy you are, but you look pretty upset" can open doors of insight for the other person that can lead to healing the hurts. It can also give you an opportunity to hear what the real issues are.

Guide the speaker in **determining what the actual problems are**. He or she may feel that a spouse or another person is the problem. Is the problem really the person or the persons' behavior? Maybe even circumstances? When we blame a person for our difficulties, we are effectively tearing down a relationship without solving the problem. Help the speaker focus on the source of the difficulties.

Guide him or her in **considering courses of action** or resources for help. Often the problem can't be solved by you or the person you're helping. If so, it is best to refer the person to a person or group who can offer more specific assistance. This may be professional help (legal, financial, emotional, and spiritual) or a support group or supportive person.

## DO NOT

- *Force people to talk or share if they do not want. Let survivors take their time to open up to you and be comfortable with your presence. This does not mean that they are rejecting you or your help. Be patient.*

## Session

# 5

## Personal Wellbeing

Along with all the work in the field it is important to know when you need to refer and consult professionals to handle certain particularly difficult situations. Also, it is very essential to maintain personal physical and psychological well-being.

### Seek professional help

We cannot take care of all that comes our way. Don't bite more than you can chew. Also remember that you are dealing with human beings caught in a very difficult and vulnerable position in their lives. You need to be very patient and sensitive. There will be

times when you will need to refer the person to someone else in the best interest of both you and the one(s) affected by the disaster.

Here's when to refer a person to a professional or supportive group :

- when you believe that improvement is "impossible" or the situation is "hopeless;"
- when the person says, "nothing is helping" or what you provide the person isn't helping;
- there are obvious or unusual changes in speech, appearance, or behaviour, including memory confusion or hallucinations or delusions;
- the person continues to be so emotional he or she can't communicate;
- there is ongoing deterioration of life (social and physical);
- all that the person reports are physical complaints;
- increased substance abuse like alcohol or drugs;
- threats of self harm or harm to others;
- aggression and abuse (verbal and physical);
- if the situation seems horrible or unbearable; and most importantly;
- if you're unsure, then refer!

**FACILITATORS TIP**

*As you go through this section please make it clear to the trainees that some of these responses could occur frequently during the 'immediate reaction'. Engaging in peer supervision before a hurried referral is a better idea.*

**Helping yourself....**

It is a difficult and traumatic situation for you too. Do not neglect yourself. It is important to ensure your health, both physical and psychological.

- Participate in group activities.
- Allow yourself to mourn personal loss if any.
- Peer supervision: discuss issues and difficulties regularly with others like you working in the field.
- Do not deny your own emotional reactions or tensions.
- Keep some time everyday just for yourself
- Continue to work on routine tasks if it is difficult to concentrate on demanding duties. Ask your colleagues/ supervisors to reschedule your duties.
- Engage yourself in some de-stressing activity (hobbies and/ or activities that relieve you e.g. going for a walk, listening to music etc.) on a regular basis.
- Ensure your physical well being. Take care of your health and nutrition.

**Winding Up**

We are not abandoning you to go and work with those affected by the disaster. We shall keep in touch. You can consult with the given panel whenever there is a pressing need. Referral list is also provided. Remember our assistance will not stop after the first interaction. Get back to us with your experiences from the field and any difficulties that you may face.

**NOTE TO FACILITATORS**

*Please provide the field level workers with the contacts and referral list.*