



Los Angeles Unified School District

School Mental Health Services

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.

ESC North

Kezia Miller

Mental Health Field

Coordinator

kezia.miller@lausd.net

(818) 758-2300

ESC West

Nancy Jefferson

Mental Health Field

Coordinator

nancy.jefferson@lausd.net

(323) 750-5167

ESC East

Socorro Valderrama

Mental Health Field

Coordinator

socorro.valderrama

@lausd.net

(323) 224-3363

ESC South

Kelly Jones

Mental Health Field

Coordinator

kelly.jones@lausd.net

(323) 754-2856

ISIC

Martha Marquez

Mental Health Field

Coordinator

martha.marquez@lausd.net

(213) 241-2612

Central

Pia Escudero

Director

pia.escudero@lausd.net

(213) 241-3841

Cecilia Ramos

Assistant Director

cecilia.ramos@lausd.net

(213) 241-3841

Ailleth Tom

Coordinator, CCIS

ailleth.tom@lausd.net

(213) 241-2174



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

- Just listen and pay attention to the child.
- Observe non verbal communication. Remember that student(s) may also show their feelings in nonverbal ways, such as increased behavioral problems or increased withdrawal.
- **Caution:** Do not investigate or probe for details; you may trigger trauma reminders or jeopardize a legal investigation if questions are leading.



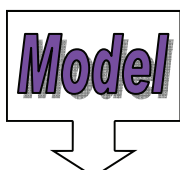
#2 PROTECT by maintaining structure, stability, and consistency.

- Follow District Guidelines and procedures regarding notification of an administrator.
- Children need to hear that what happened is not their fault and that they did the right thing by telling.
- Conduct the discussion in private and reassure the student that the disclosure enables adults to help and protect.
- Maintain daily routines, activities and structure with clear expectations, consistent rules.
- **Caution:** Do not express doubt or disbelief.
- **Caution:** Do not make judgmental statements or place blame.



#3 CONNECT through interaction, activities & resources.

- Explain your responsibility to report.
- Explain your duty to protect and keep student(s) safe.
- Consider referring the student to your learning support staff (psychiatric social worker, school psychologists, counselor, nurse) finding resources on campus that can offer support to student(s).
- "Check in" with student(s) on a regular basis.
- **Caution:** Do not make promises or false assurances.



#4 MODEL

- It is good to be aware of your thoughts and feelings, and reactions about the event. They can affect your students. Your students will be watching you for both verbal and nonverbal cues and it will influence how your students cope and behave.
- Monitor conversations that students may hear.
- **Caution:** Do not express shock or anger at the possible perpetrator or event.
- **Caution:** Students often love the person who mistreats them.



#5 TEACH about normal changes that can occur when traumatized.

- Student(s) may have different reactions, even to the same event.
- Encourage your students to identify and use positive coping strategies to help them after the event.
- Help your students problem solve to get through each day successfully.
- Help students set small "doable" goals and share in these achievements as "wins."
- **Caution:** With time and support, students generally do better. If they do not, they should be encouraged and taught to seek assistance from a parent or a teacher they know.

The PFA: Listen, Protect, Connect Model was created in partnership by UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters, LAUSD Trauma Services Adaptation Center and the National Center for the School Crisis and Bereavement.

The authors M. Schreiber, R. Gurwitsch, and M. Wong have authorized this adaptation.

For more information, contact your local School Mental Health Staff Member or visit www.tsaforschools.org