

With care for everyone

Psychological first aid (PFA)

Supporting materials

Tips on the content of the regulations on the PFA helpers (workplace level)

The regulations on the PFA helpers from among enterprise staff can be an annex to the existing PSS at workplace policy and programme or be part of collective agreements.

► What should be considered in the regulations on the PFA helpers

Aspects to be elaborated in the regulations¹:

- What is PFA, and its importance
- Who can be a PFA helper?
- PFA helpers' functions
- What ethical principles should a PFA helper observe?
- What support is provided to the PFA helpers themselves?
- What is expected from all other staff for these regulations to be implemented in practice?

¹ This list and the following ones are not exhaustive, they can be elaborated based on the specific needs at workplace and experience of implementing PSS programme at workplace.

► Obligations & Functions of a PFA helper

Obligations:

- care for their own mental and physical health;
- take a relevant PFA training and be available for any additional training on mental health;
- spend the most part of working time at their actual workplace to be available to colleagues;
- have an opportunity to stop working in a situation when PFA is required;
- refer the person to another PFA helper as appropriate;
- adhere to unbiased attitude, the principle of confidentiality, and the "do no harm" rule;
- the PFA helper who is not a psychologist or psychiatrist must not diagnose, consult and give advice;
- PFA helper should know and share the contacts of/refer to institutions/persons who provide qualified psychological assistance.

Functions:

- recognize signs of acute stress responses and mental health conditions in their colleagues/customers/trainees;
- assess suicide or self-harm risk;
- have a supportive talk (active listening and empathy);
- encourage evidence-based self-help strategies;
- offer referral to professional assistance as necessary.

► Support to PFA helpers

To provide support to PFA helpers, reflect and answer such questions:

1. Is there a lead PFA coordinator at the enterprise?
2. If creation of a network of "PFA helpers" for mutual support and experience sharing is necessary and envisaged?
3. Are the "PFA helpers" entitled to free psychological aid at any moment during their work?
4. How does the enterprise motivate and support its PFA helpers?

► Expectations from all other staff within the PFA regulations framework

- All staff are recommended to approach the PFA team and their supervisor concerning their own mental health or mental health of their colleague at any time during working hours.
- If the PFA helpers are not available, it is advised to approach... (reference to contacts of the free crisis centre in your region and/or of a corporate psychologist).
- All staff should realize that PFA is not psychotherapy or counselling, that it is the first support and assistance in addressing urgent psychosocial needs.

