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PSYCHOSOCIAL
SUPPORT AT WORKPLACE PROGRAMMES

PILOT INITIATIVE

January 2023 Training on psychological first aid at workplace



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ilo.org/shd4Ukraine

Psychological first aid

as an important part of psychosocial support to workers



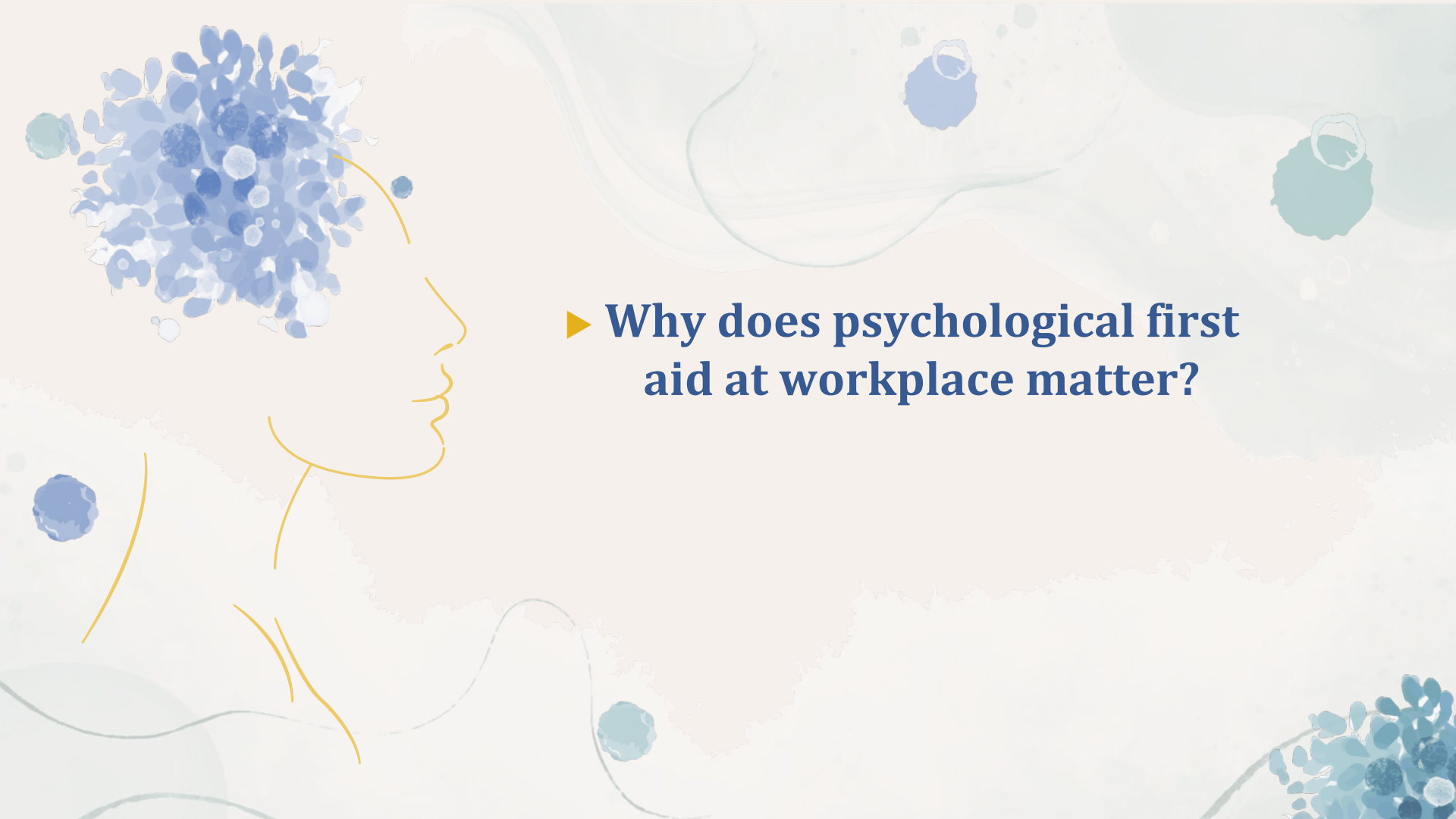
Key points



Psychological first aid (PFA)



Psychosocial risk factors and psychological safety at work



► **Why does psychological first aid at workplace matter?**

Psychological first aid at workplace **matters because:**

- ▶ **More than 8.5 million Ukrainians** are at risk of mental disorders due to the war
- ▶ IDPs from occupied areas are the most vulnerable workers



Source: WHO

Psychological first aid at the workplace **matters** **because:**



- ▶ Global economy loses about **1 trillion US dollars annually** due to productivity loss as a result of depression and anxiety
(**12 billion** working days lost every year)

Psychological first aid at workplace **matters because:**



- Workplaces can be both a protecting factor and a factor of risk for mental health.

PFA is an opportunity of reducing or preventing PS risks.

WHO recommends the following for protection of workers' mental health:

- ▶ **trainings for structural unit managers** on mental health (identification of signs and response) and on psychosocial risk management
- ▶ **trainings for workers** on mental health support and to reduce stigma in work teams
- ▶ **organizational measures** (preventive interventions at workplace, help resources, and reasonable adjustments/modifications)





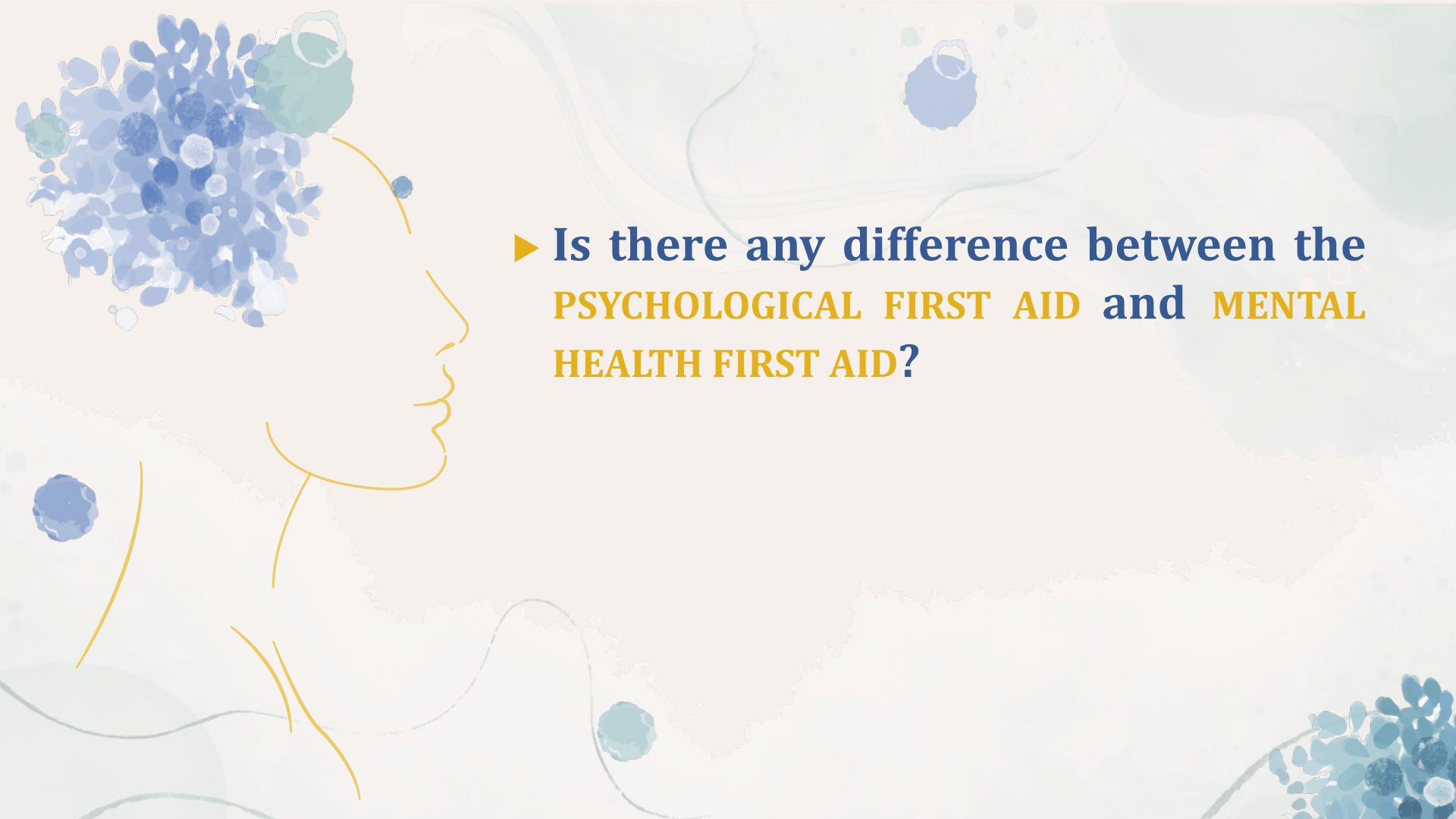
► What is the role of a
mental health
ambassador at
enterprise?

Mental health ambassadors as an efficient proactive approach tool



- Promote mental health support ideas among colleagues
- Maintain talks on mental well-being
- Reduce stigma caused by mental problems in the work team (own example, initiatives, protection and support)
- Advocate for timely approach for specialized psychological aid
- Trained to recognize signs of mental health conditions and provide psychological first aid



The background is an abstract composition. On the left, there is a profile of a human head facing right, rendered in a light beige color. The head is surrounded by various organic, watercolor-like shapes in shades of blue, teal, and green. Some of these shapes resemble clusters of cells or small plants. There are also thin, curved lines in gold and grey scattered across the background. The overall style is soft and artistic.

► Is there any difference between the
PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID and **MENTAL**
HEALTH FIRST AID?

Mental Health First Aid Programme



- ▶ 2002 – commencement, the Programme development in Australia
- ▶ 2004 – version for workplaces
- ▶ 2008 – awarded in the US as the best international early intervention programme in mental health
- ▶ 25 countries, thousands of employers
- ▶ More than 5 million people across the world trained



Mental health first aid

workplace practice examples



- ▶ **USA** – 200+ companies since 2013 (Bank of America, Gillette, Starbucks, Unilever...)
- ▶ **UK** – course on support of MHFA providers
- ▶ **Switzerland** – ENSA programme (Anyone can become a first aider!)
- ▶ **Slovakia** – Coalition of Companies for Mental Health Support
- ▶ **Canada** – peer-to-peer training as a basis for MHFA at work

Case Study: IKEA

- ▶ **training** “Caring for Yourself During COVID-19 and Caring for Your Team”
- ▶ 315 staff trained to provide MHFA, **including the Director-General**
- ▶ **results:** reduced stigma, higher awareness of mental health



“The Mental Health First Aid training has taught us to be more confident when supporting those around us, during the pandemic, and afterwards as well. Our leaders really appreciate this knowledge, and it has changed the conversations we are having already.”

Mike Ward, CEO & Chief Sustainability Officer for IKEA Canada

Green Light to Talk Programme

PwC, Australia, 2018



- Leaders share their personal stories on mental health conditions and experience in psychotherapy
- As a result, stigma is reduced whereas visits to a psychologist increase

Mental health first aid



- ▶ An evidence-based method of providing first aid to a person that shows signs of development or aggravation of mental health conditions (anxiety and depression disorders, PTSD, addiction, etc.);
- ▶ encourages applying for professional mental health aid;
- ▶ includes identification of mental disorder signs to intervene timely and prevent severe consequences (e.g. avert suicide);
- ▶ aimed at reducing stigma;
- ▶ increases the MHFA provider's confidence by a clearly outlined scope of aid.

MHFA action algorithm

ALGEE technique



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID ACTION PLAN

- A**pproach the person, assess and assist with any crisis
- L**isten and communicate non-judgementally
- G**ive support and information
- E**ncourage the person to get appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage other supports



Approach the person, assess needs and risks

Listen

Give support and information

Encourage the person to get professional help

Encourage self-help and other supports



► What is psychological first aid aimed at?

Psychological first aid

► urgent help to a person aimed at:

1. **recognizing** the person's **acute stress responses** and **stabilizing** the person **emotionally** (restoring the functioning);
2. ensuring an attentive attitude and a clear **action algorithm**;
3. strengthening **emotional resilience** and reducing impact of a traumatic event by providing support and **protection from further harm**.





► What are the three actions in provision of psychological first aid? (algorithm)

Action algorithm during PFA (action principle)

3xL technique

Look



Listen



Link



Psychological first aid's three action principles: look, listen, and link. Image from '*Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers*,' World Health Organisation



“Assessing readiness to provide PFA”

checklist

Assessing readiness to provide PFA checklist

- ☐ My emotional state is normal, and I am ready to provide PFA
- ☐ I know what signs can indicate probable mental health conditions
- ☐ I know what responses a person can show in an acute stress situation
- ☐ I feel confident in what to do, what to say and how to react in a situation when a person needs psychological first aid
- ☐ I know what the PFA safety rules mean
- ☐ I know what principles to observe to do no harm
- ☐ I know how to provide information on professional help resources correctly

Safari exercise

group work

Group 1. What does the *Look* action principle mean?

Group 2. What does the *Listen* action principle mean?

Group 3. What does the *Link* action principle mean?

Group 4. What to say and not to say during PFA:
analyze the suggested list of phrases.

Group 5. What to do and not to do during PFA: analyze
the suggested list of phrases.

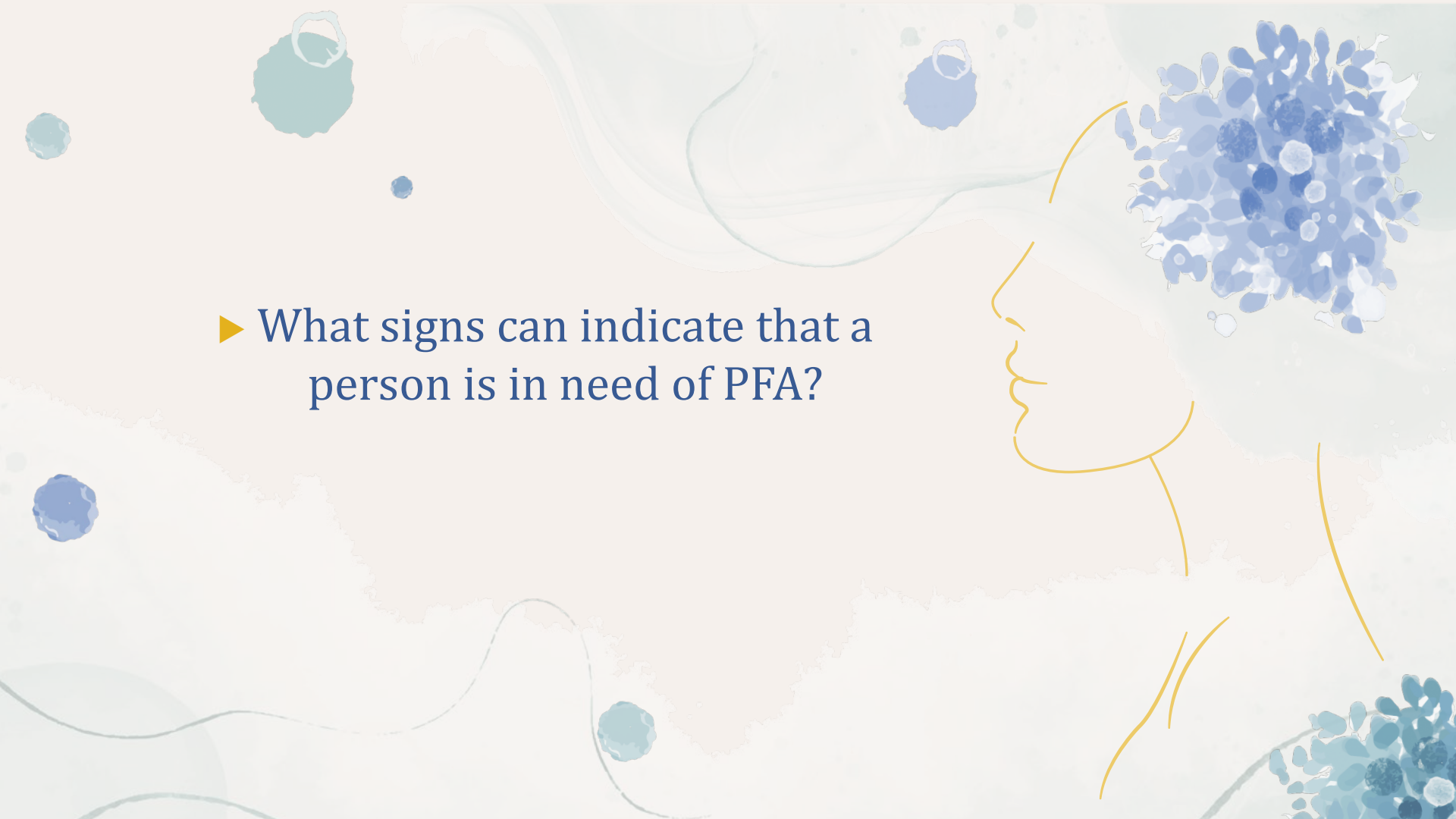


Action principle and goals of psychological first aid



LOOK!

- ▶ **Check for safety** (Is it safe to me to intervene? Is there a safe space around?)
- ▶ **Assess the person's needs** (Is the person in need of urgent medical and/or psychiatric aid?)
- ▶ **Recognize signs of an acute stress response**

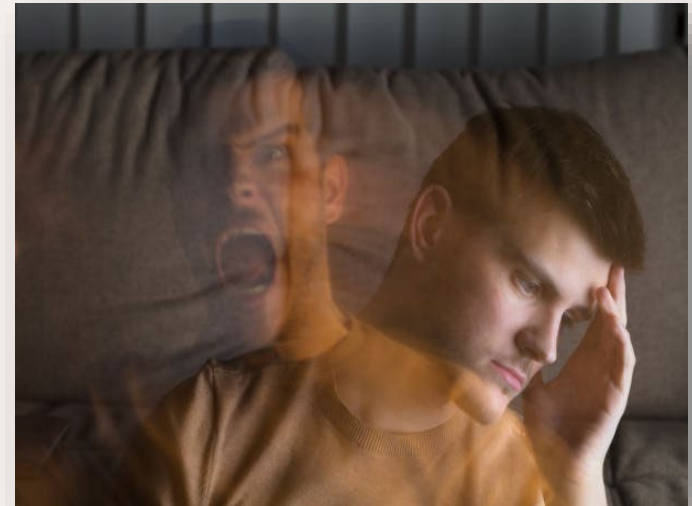
The background is a soft, abstract composition. It features a light beige profile of a woman's head facing right, with delicate yellow lines for her hair and jawline. Surrounding the profile are various decorative elements: teal and blue circular shapes, some with white outlines, and clusters of blue and white floral or leaf-like patterns. The overall color palette is muted and artistic, with a focus on soft textures and organic forms.

► What signs can indicate that a person is in need of PFA?

Emotional stress responses

what we can see

- ☐ Aggression
- ☐ Apathy
- ☐ Hysterics
- ☐ Nervous tremor
- ☐ Panic
- ☐ Crying
- ☐ Motor agitation
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Stupor



Action principle and goals of psychological first aid



LISTEN!

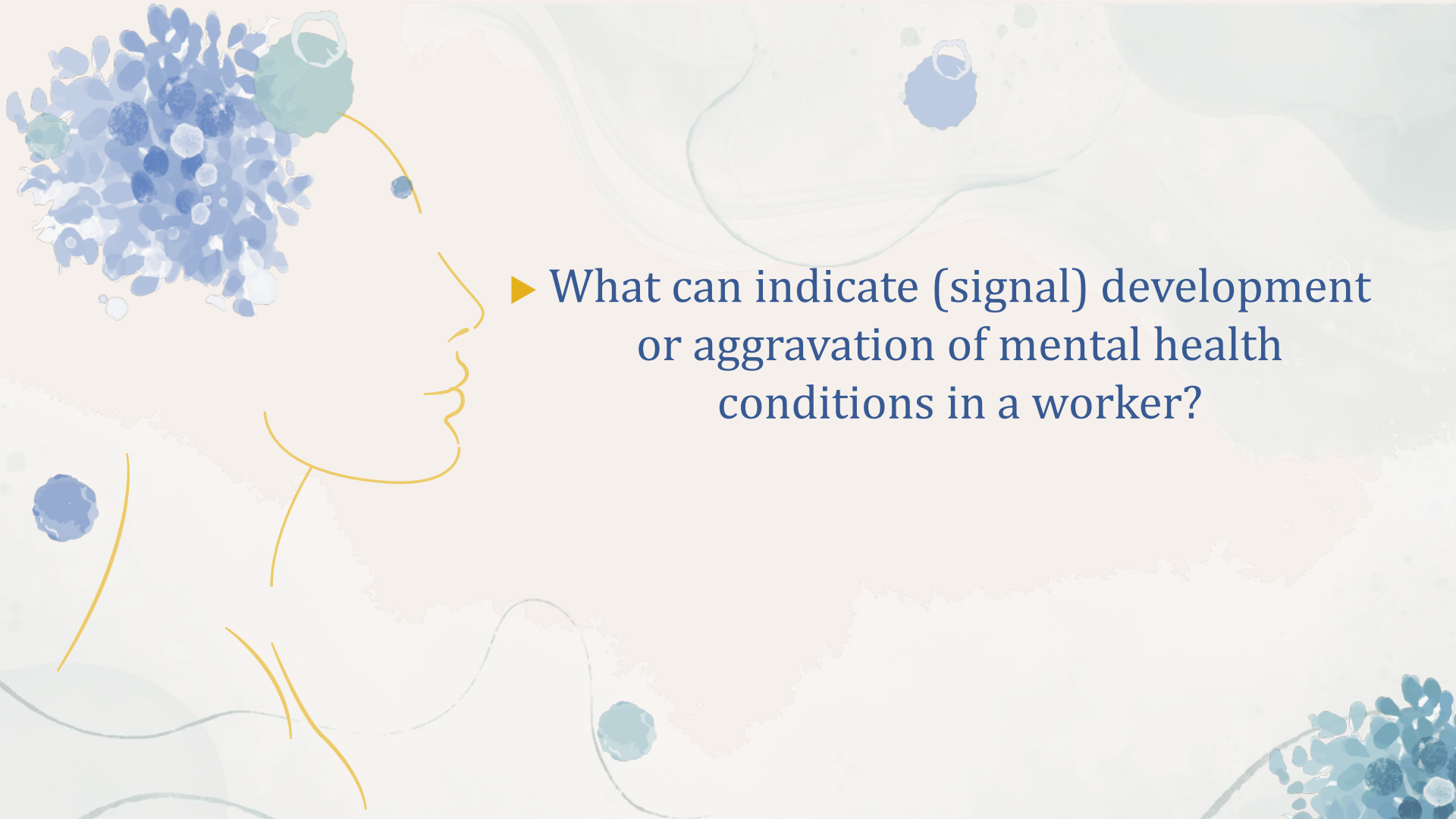
- ▶ Listen actively and learn the person's priority needs and the nature of his/her concern

Action principle and goals of psychological first aid



Link!

- ▶ Give contacts of a centre/specialist if the person needs professional medical, psychological or social aid
- ▶ Help reach out to relatives
- ▶ Encourage self-help – “refer” the person to use his/her own resources for recovery

The background is an abstract illustration. On the left, there is a profile of a human head facing right, rendered in a light beige color. The head is composed of various organic, flowing shapes. To the left of the head, there is a large, dense cluster of blue and green circular shapes, resembling a flower or a group of cells. Several thin, curved lines in shades of blue and green are scattered around the head and the cluster. The overall style is soft and artistic.

► What can indicate (signal) development or aggravation of mental health conditions in a worker?



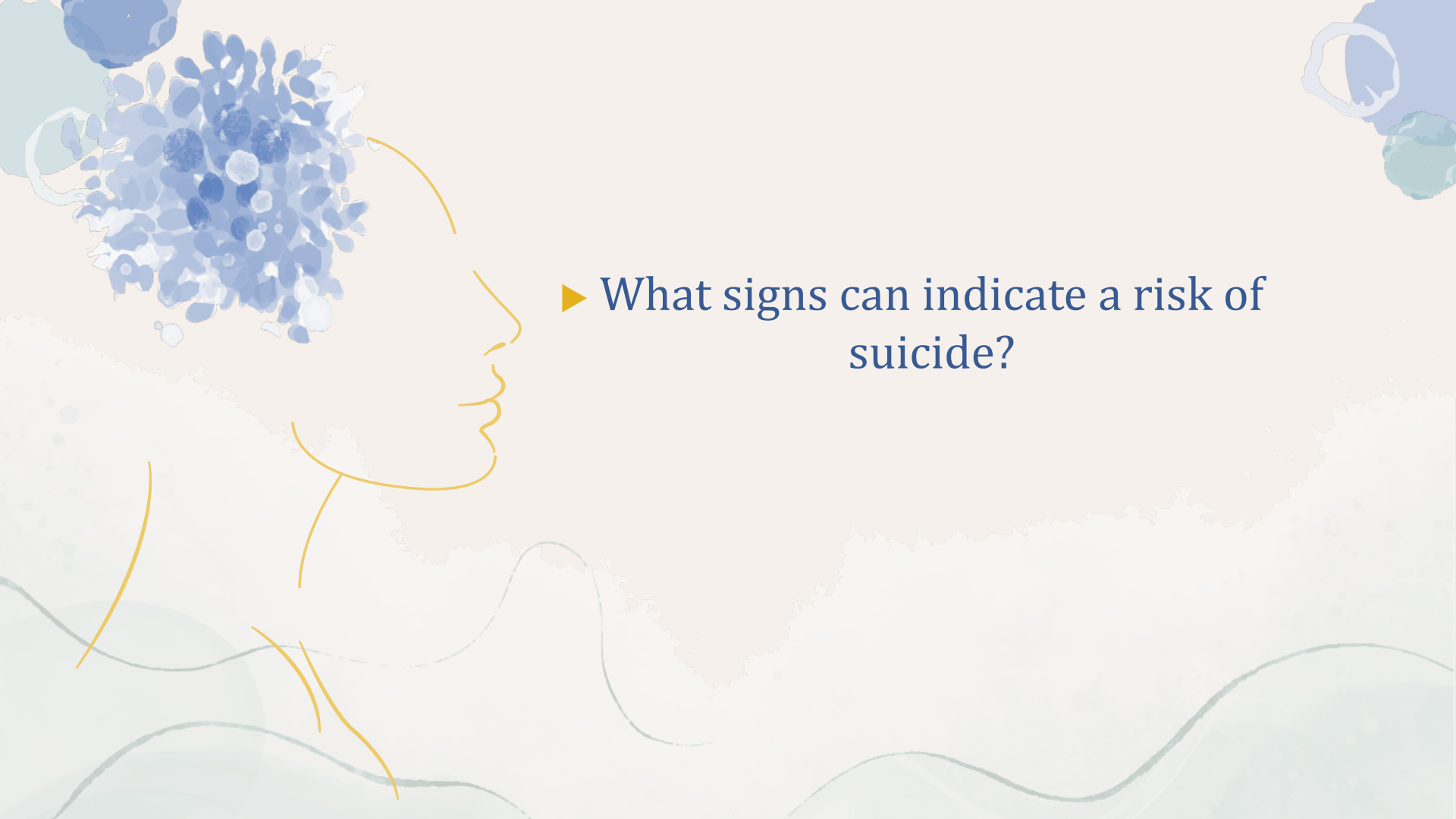
► What are the 4 groups of signs typical of a person having PTSD?

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

4 groups of key signs

- 1) Disturbing memories
- 2) Hyper-excitation
- 3) Negative thoughts and emotions
- 4) Avoidance



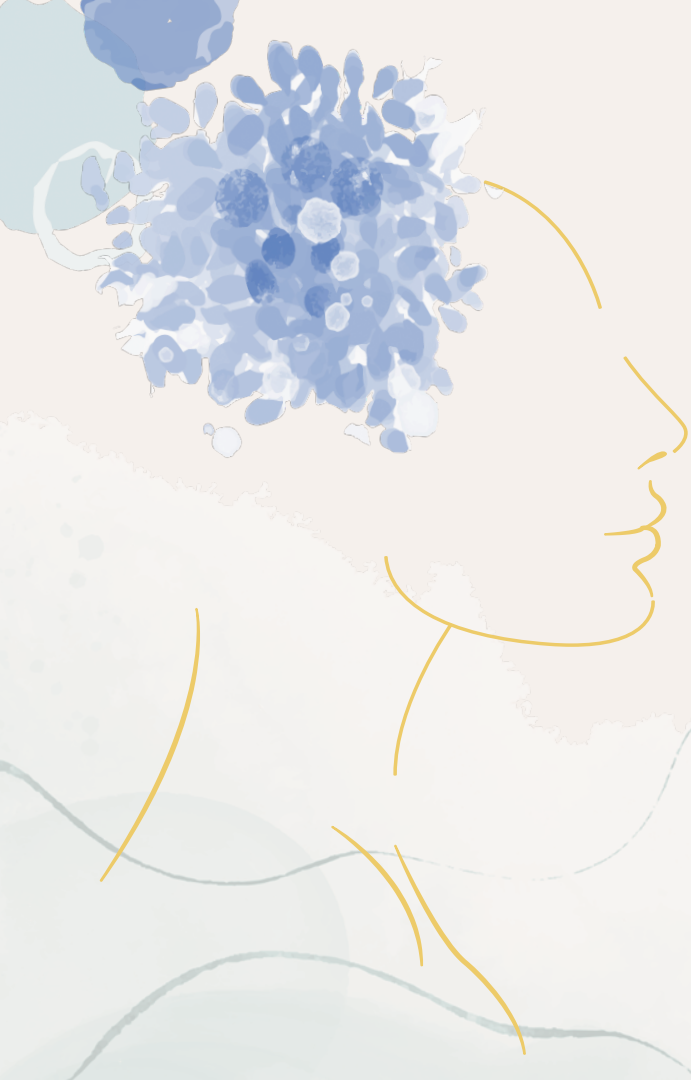
A stylized illustration of a person's head in profile, facing right. The head is outlined in a light orange color. Inside the head, there is a large, complex, blue structure resembling a brain or a cluster of cells. Several thin, wavy lines in shades of blue and green extend from the bottom of the head, suggesting movement or thought. The background is a light beige color with some faint, abstract shapes in blue and green.

► What signs can indicate a risk of suicide?

Risk of suicide signals

A person:

- ☐ talks about a desire to die or harm him/herself
- ☐ expresses a feeling of hopelessness
- ☐ says he/she is a burden for near and dear ones
- ☐ starts abusing psychoactive substances
- ☐ abandons social contacts and activities
- ☐ has noticeable appetite and sleeping disorders
- ☐ may begin to give away his/her valuables/property or talks about his/her testament
- ☐ shows a behaviour not typical of him/her before

A stylized illustration of a person's head in profile, facing right. The head is outlined in a light orange color. Inside the head, there is a complex, blue, brain-like structure composed of many small, interconnected circles and lines. Several thin, orange lines extend from the brain structure towards the text on the right. The background is a light beige color with some faint, wavy lines in shades of blue and green at the bottom.

► How do you understand the
“psychological aid at workplace”?

“Psychological safety at workplace is a belief that no-one will be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes whereas it’s safe to take interpersonal risks within a team”

Emi Edmondson, Professor at Harvard School of Business



Psychologically safe working environment advantages



- a working environment that promotes:
 - productive work
 - personal growth
 - inclusive culture
 - decrease in injuries and accidents
 - mental and physical well-being of workers

- 
- ▶ How do you understand the “psychosocial risks at the workplace”?
 - ▶ What psychosocial hazards (factors) of these risks can exist?

Psychosocial risks at work

definition



- any risks connected with hazards that are related to *how work is organized, social factors at work and aspects of the work environment* and can cause psychological, social or physical harm

ISO 45003:2021 «Occupational health and safety management – Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks»

Psychosocial risk factors hazard examples

- ❑ excessive workloads
- ❑ conflicting demands
- ❑ inefficient communication (vertical/horizontal)
- ❑ no support from management/leaders (lack of positive culture)
- ❑ workers' having no right in decision-making
- ❑ insecurity at work (discrimination, violence and harassment)
- ❑ External factors: new viruses, disasters, war



Example of psychosocial risk assessment checklist

- ☐ Do workers have any fear of reporting on unacceptable behaviour, violations or mistakes?
- ☐ Are there any cases of absenteeism, presenteeism, or leaveism?
- ☐ Are there any difficulties with staff engagement and retention?
- ☐ Are there any complaints of staff work from customers?
- ☐ Are there any complaints from workers concerning violation and harassment by customers/managers/colleagues/other persons?
- ☐ Are there any complaints concerning organization of the work process?
- ☐ Are there any accidents and injuries?
- ☐ Are there any complaints concerning respect for workers' rights?
- ☐ Are there any workers in need of reasonable accommodations/adjustments?

Psychologically safe working environment

ways to create



Source: ISO 45003:2021

- ✓ make workers' psychological well-being an integral part of the enterprise culture;
- ✓ develop and implement actions to prevent and eliminate psychosocial hazards and mitigate risks;
- ✓ identify conditions, circumstances and demands at workplace likely to cause harm to workers' mental health and well-being;
- ✓ manage psychosocial risks within the general policy on occupational safety and health.



Leadership as a psychosocial protection factor

- Positive social connection with a team
- Manifestation of empathy = individual and collective resilience in hard times
- Help above all = staff commitment
- Culture of openness instead of culture of fear



Harvard Business Review

Group work

Group 1. What should be considered in the regulations (annex to the PSS policy) on the workers providing PFA at the workplace?

Group 2. How are “reasonable accommodation” and a worker’s mental health interlinked?



Regulations on PSS (as part of the PSS policy)

questions worth answering

- 1) What is PFA? What is its importance?
- 2) How to name such a “first helper”?
- 3) Who can provide PFA?
- 4) What are the functions of a worker providing PFA?
- 5) What ethical principles should a PFA provider observe?
- 6) How to support the PFA provider themselves?
- 7) What is expected of all other staff within the framework of these regulations?



Obligations of a PFA “helper” within the enterprise policy framework



- ✓ 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;
- ✓ have an opportunity to stop working in a situation when PFA is required;

Obligations of a PFA “helper” within the enterprise policy

- ✓ 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 provider who is not a psychologist or psychiatrist must not diagnose, consult and give advice.



Functions of a PFA “helper” within the enterprise policy

- ✓ 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;
- ✓ refer to professional assistance as necessary.



Support of PFA “helpers” questions worth answering



- 1) Is there a lead PFA coordinator at the enterprise?
- 2) Is it planned to create a network of “first helpers” for mutual support and experience sharing?
- 3) Are the “first helpers” entitled to free psychological aid at any moment during their work?
- 4) How does the enterprise motivate and support its “first helpers”?

Expectations from all other staff within the PFA regulations

- ✓ 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 a 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.



Reasonable accommodations/adjustments

examples

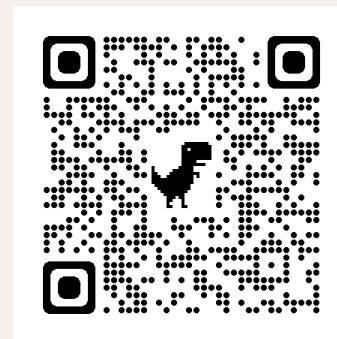
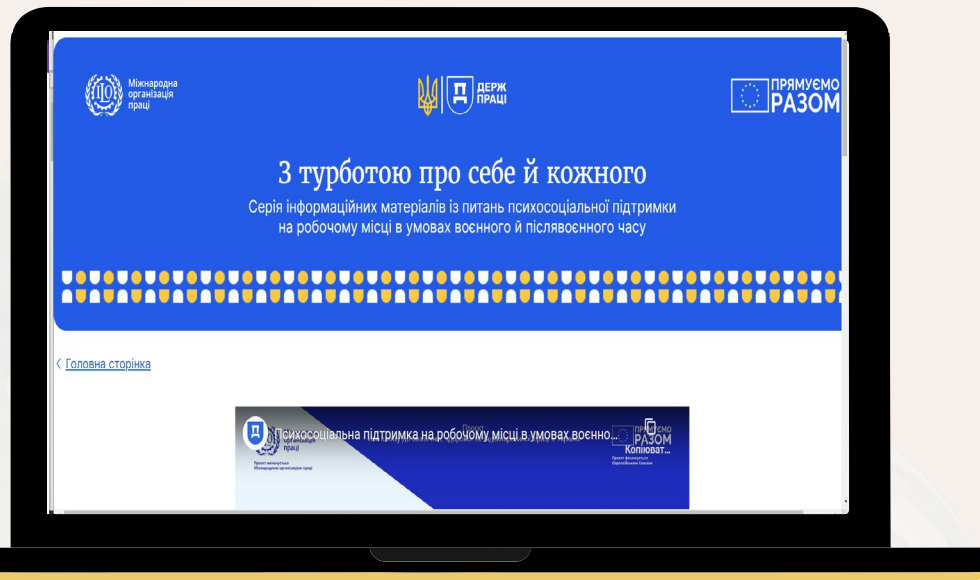


- Flexible work schedule
- Adjustment of a job description
- Extra time to perform a task
- Additional leave to care for one's own mental and physical health
- Workplace design (ergonomics, less triggers)
- Possibility to watch a meeting in recording
- Regular meetings with an immediate supervisor

Example of psychosocial risk assessment checklist

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More information and video materials



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