

# **Love Ukraine Hosts Event Welcome**

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# Host family support

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MindSenseAbility



# Welcome

- Who we are – MindSenseAbility
- Our plan to help :
  - To support Ukrainian refugees through helping you
  - Practical approaches – basic psychological support
  - Not appropriate for MSA to provide direct therapy
  - Drop in sessions to support you to manage



# Overview: Basic Psychological Support

- How people may present after a crisis event
- Things to be aware of before you help
- Theory: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, trauma triangle, amygdala hijack
- Communication styles
- Active Listening
- Coping and Problem solving
- Supporting children
- External services



# How do crisis events affect people?

People will experience a wide range of emotions following a crisis.

How someone reacts depends on many factors, including:

- the nature and severity of the event(s) they experience;
- their experience with previous distressing events;
- the support they have in their life from others;
- their physical health;
- their personal and family history of mental health problems;
- their cultural background and traditions;
- their age (for example, children of different age groups react differently).



# How individuals may present following a crisis event

People will react in various ways to a crisis. Some examples of distress responses to crisis are listed below:

- physical symptoms (for example, shaking, headaches, feeling very tired, loss of appetite, aches and pains)
- crying, sadness, depressed mood, grief
- anxiety, fear
- being “on guard” or “jumpy”
- worry that something really bad is going to happen
- insomnia, nightmares
- irritability, anger



# How individuals may present following a crisis event

- guilt, shame (for example, for having survived, or for not helping or saving others)
- confused, emotionally numb, or feeling unreal or in a daze
- appearing withdrawn or very still (not moving)
- not responding to others, not speaking at all
- disorientation (for example, not knowing their own name, where they are from, or what happened)
- not being able to care for themselves or their children (for example, not eating or drinking, not able to make simple decisions)

Some people may only be mildly distressed or not distressed at all.

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



# Trauma Triangle

**Trauma Model of Young person's Needs. These can vary up and down the triangle so services need to be flexible to ensure that the young person is getting the correct level of intervention**



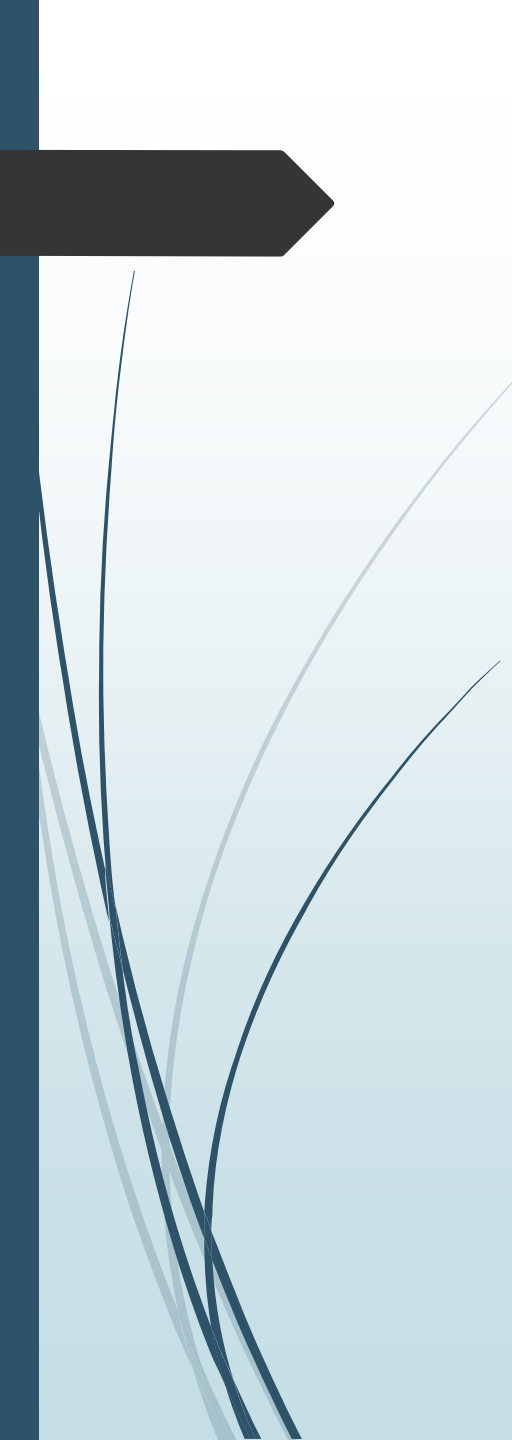
Hampshire Child and Adolescent  
Mental Health Services





# Factors to consider when offering support: Dignity, Respect and Rights

- Safety: avoid putting people at further risk through your own actions. Make sure to the best of your ability the adults and children you help are safe and protect them from psychological or physical harm.
- Dignity: treat people with respect and according to their cultural and social norms.
- Rights: help individuals with you to claim their rights and access available support.
- Respect peoples rights to make their own decisions
- Respect privacy and keep a persons story confidential if this is appropriate



# Factors to consider when offering support: culture, ourselves etc.

- Aim to help in a way that is most appropriate, comfortable and helpful to the people you are supporting.
- Language – how much will a language barrier impact on how you can help? If the barrier is too significant you may be better off sticking with practical support
- Gender and age – do these impact on how you will interact?
- Touching/behaviour – would it be right to touch their hand or their shoulder?
- Is it customary for the person living with you to share their thoughts and feelings?
- Be aware of what you yourself are bringing to the relationship/discussion (your own anxieties, behaviours, your own biases, prejudices and needs)



# Look after yourself

- Helping responsibly means taking care of your own health and wellbeing
- You may be affected by conversations that you have
- Pay extra attention to your own wellbeing and be sure you are emotionally and physically able to help others
- Take care of yourself so that you can best care for others
- Be aware of the impact of having a host family on other family members – do you need to adjust and offer them support?



# Meeting Basic Needs

Before even considering talking focus on each persons basic needs:

- A home, food, and water and education for children.
- Health services for injuries or to help with chronic (long-term) medical conditions.
- Understandable and correct information about the events in Ukraine, loved ones etc
- Being able to contact loved ones, friends and other social supports.
- Access to specific support related to one's culture or religion.
- Being consulted and involved in important decisions.
- Advice about external services that may offer help



# Communication when someone is upset

- Host family members can be upset, anxious, angry and/or confused. They may blame themselves for things that have occurred.
- Being calm and showing understanding can help people in distress feel more safe and secure, respected, cared for and understood.
- They may want to tell you their story – listening can be a great support, HOWEVER it is important **not** to pressure anyone to tell you what they have been through.
- Some people may **not** want to speak about what they have been through, but when upset they may value if you stay with them quietly, explain you are there to talk and offer practical support – a cup of tea etc. Don't talk too much – staying silent may allow them space and encourage them to share if they wish.
- To communicate well – be aware of your words and body language – facial expressions, eye contact, gesture
- Be yourself – be genuine and sincere when offering help and care.



# Active Listening I

- Listening properly is essential and helps people to feel calm.
- Listening is not something that just happens – it is an active process, you make a conscious decision to listen and understand.
- Listen with all your senses:

**Eyes: give the person your undivided attention**

**Ears: truly hearing their concerns**

**Heart: with caring and showing respect**

- Requires an open minded, non-judgmental and empathic approach
- Based on the concept that the capacity for self-insight, problem solving and growth mainly lies **within** the speaker
- Show interest with verbal and non verbal messages. Providing this feedback the person often feels more at ease and will talk more.



# Active Listening II

- Requires patience, with pauses and short periods of silence – give the speaker time to explore their own thoughts and feelings
- Do more listening than talking
- Listen to the meaning and feeling of what is being said by the speaker – rather than the words or facts alone
- Aim to understand the person and their feelings
- Pay attention, put aside distracting thoughts, don't prepare a response
- Non verbal active listening:

Small smiles, nods of the head, don't be distracted

Eye contact – but gauge how much appropriate,

Posture – leaning slightly forward

Mirroring of facial expressions – shows sympathy and empathy

- Listen to the speakers body language ? Nervous ? upset



# Active listening III

## **Verbal active listening**

- Ask relevant (open) questions, use small verbal responses – mm, I see etc.

- Provide feedback which may involve:

Reflecting back – repeating back or para phrasing shows comprehension.

Summarising: take the main points and summarise back

Clarification – ask questions to ensure correct message received

Use open questions – who, what, when, how, where (allows exploration)

Avoid closed questions – leading and elicit limited responses

Avoid why – use I wonder, that's interesting, can you tell me more..

- Remember details from previous conversations = shows understanding



# Active listening – what to avoid

- Avoid – giving opinions, giving advice, making judgements, problem solving for the speaker, talking about your own experiences, changing the subject to yourself, agreeing too much with the speaker
- Avoid: pretending to understand, missing the meaning, being long winded, missing the verbal cues, stereotyped reactions e.g. how did that make you feel.
- Avoid: reflective responses that are not appropriate to the situation
- Avoid why, closed questions

e.g. what is the time, answer – I can see you are concerned about the time



# Amygdala Hijack approach – Dan Siegal

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9u3UvXqArqs>

- **Strategies (to reduce the hijack)**

Simple:

How do they feel? (name it to tame it)

About what?

Why?

The 6 steps:

Stop and breathe deeply

What am I feeling (physically)

Label the emotion

Tell yourself it will pass

Investigate it (what was the trigger this will re-engage prefrontal cortex)

Choose the best action to help yourself



# Simple grounding strategies

If someone feels unreal or disconnected from their surroundings, it may help them to make contact with their current environment and themselves. You can do this by asking them to:

- Place and feel their feet on the floor.
- Tap their fingers or hands on their lap.
- Notice some non-distressing things in their environment, such as things they can see, hear or feel. Have them tell you what they see and hear.
- Encourage the person to focus on their breathing, and to breathe slowly.



# Problem solving and coping

- A person in distress can feel overwhelmed with worries and fears. Help them to consider the most urgent needs, and how to prioritise and address them.
- Being able to manage a few issues will give the person a greater sense of control in the situation and strengthen their own ability to cope.

Remember to:

- help people identify supports in their life, such as friends or family,
- Help the person to find practical suggestions to meet their own needs;
- help the person to consider how they coped with difficult situations in the past, and affirm their ability to cope with the current situation;
- help the person think through what helps them to feel better. Encourage them to use positive coping strategies and avoid negative coping strategies



# Encourage Positive coping strategies

- Get enough rest.
- Eat and drink regularly
- Talk and spend time with family and friends (where possible).
- Discuss problems with someone you trust – problem solving
- Do activities that help you relax (walk, sing, pray, play with children).
- Do physical exercise.
- Get involved in community activities.
- Link with other Ukrainian families
- Some adults talk more when completing activities/being side by side

# Problem Solver

What is the problem?

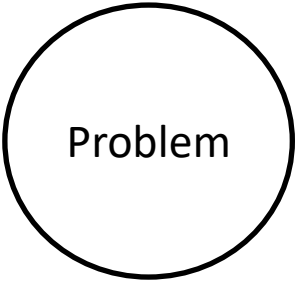
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Whose problem is it? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the possible solutions?



What size is the problem?

Size	
Big problem	10
	9
	8
Medium problem	7
	6
	5
	4
Small problem	3
	2
	1
No problem	0



What are the three best solutions?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

This is your action plan



# Discourage Negative coping strategies

- Avoid drugs or drinking excessive alcohol.
- Avoid sleeping all day – encourage activities
- Avoid working all the time without any rest or relaxation.
- Try not to isolate themselves from friends and loved ones.
- Avoid forgetting basic personal hygiene.
- Avoid aggression and violence.



# How are children affected by a crisis:

- Many children – including adolescents – are particularly vulnerable in a crisis situation.
- Crisis events often disrupt their familiar world, including the people, places and routines that make them feel secure.
- Older children who are affected by a crisis may be at risk of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation (common in the chaos of crisis situations).
- Young children are often particularly vulnerable - cannot meet their basic needs or protect themselves, and their caregivers may be overwhelmed.
- Girls and boys often face somewhat different risks. Usually girls face the greatest risk of sexual violence and exploitation, and those who have been abused may be stigmatized and isolated.

# How are children affected by a crisis:

- How children react to the hardships of a crisis (for example, witnessing destruction, injury or death, being exposed to the elements, lack of food and water) depends on their age and developmental stage.
- Reactions also depend on the ways their caregivers and other adults interact with them. They cope better with a stable, calm adult with them.
- Children and young people may experience similar distress reactions as adults do. They may also have some of the following specific distress reactions:
  - Young children may return to earlier behaviours (for example, bedwetting or thumb-sucking), they may cling to caregivers, and reduce their play or use repetitive play related to the distressing event.
  - School-age children may believe they caused bad things to happen, develop new fears, may be less affectionate, feel alone and be preoccupied with protecting or rescuing people in the crisis.
  - Adolescents may feel “nothing”, feel different from or isolated from their friends, or they may display risk-taking behaviour or negative attitudes



# How caregivers can help children:

- Family and other caregivers are important sources of protection and emotional support for children.
- Avoid separating young children from caregivers, brothers and sisters, and loved ones.

## **Helping Infants:**

- Keep them warm and safe.
- Keep them away from loud noises and chaos.
- Give cuddles and hugs.
- Keep a regular feeding and sleeping schedule, if possible.
- Speak in a calm and soft voice.



# How caregivers can help children:

## Helping young children:

- Give them extra time and attention, listen to them, explore their feelings.
- Remind them often that they are safe
- Explain to them that they are not to blame for bad things that happened.
- Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible.
- Give simple answers about what happened without scary details. Don't shield them completely from the news - Newsround
- Allow them to stay close to you if they are fearful or clingy.
- Be patient with children who start demonstrating behaviours they did when they were younger.
- Provide a chance to play and relax, reinforce positive actions
- Be aware of your own feelings



# How caregivers can help children:

## **Older children and adolescents:**

- Give them your time and attention.
- Listen carefully to their thoughts, feelings and fears without being judgmental.
- Help them to keep regular routines.
- Provide facts about what has happened and explain what is going on now. Try not to shield them from the news. Allow time for hard questions.
- Talk about what they are seeing – TV/Internet etc
- Allow them to be sad. Don't expect them to be tough.
- Set clear rules and expectations.
- Ask them about any difficulties they may be having and support them with trying to reduce them
- Encourage and allow opportunities for them to be helpful.
- Help them manage their social feed.



# How caregivers can help children:

- Promote the parents ability to look after their children and problem solve difficulties.
- Protect them from being exposed to any gruesome scenes, like injured people or terrible destruction on the TV.
- Protect them from hearing upsetting stories about the event.
- Allow contact with family members and friends.
- Children may talk more when listened to, when they feel safe and sometimes through activities – playing with toys, colouring etc.
- **Remember that children also have their own resources for coping.** Learn what these are and support positive coping strategies, while helping them to avoid negative coping strategies.



# Support from external services and practical support

## **Connect with loved ones and social support :**

- It has been shown that people who feel they had good social support after a crisis cope better than those who feel they were not well supported. Because of this, linking people with loved ones and social support is an important.
- Help keep families together, and keep children with their parents and loved ones.
- Help people to contact friends and relatives so they can get support; for example, provide a way for them to call loved ones.
- If a person lets you know that prayer, religious practice or support from religious leaders might be helpful for them, try to connect them with their spiritual community.
- Help bring affected people together to help each other. For example, ask people to help care for the elderly, or link individuals without family to other community members.



# External services

I think you will have more knowledge about this than us!

- Health and mental health services – don't forget vaccinations, eye and hearing checks
- Financial organisations
- Education (NEET)
- Employment opportunities

Couple of useful links for children's mental health:

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

<https://www.minded.org.uk/>

# Things to say and do...

<i>Be honest and trustworthy.</i>	<i>Be patient and calm.</i>
<i>Respect people's right to make their own decisions</i>	<i>Give information in a way the person can understand – keep it simple.</i>
<i>Be aware of and set aside your own biases and prejudices.</i>	<i>Acknowledge how they are feeling and any losses or important events they tell you about, such as loss of their home or death of a loved one. "I'm so sorry. I can imagine this is very sad for you."</i>
<i>Respect privacy and keep the person's story confidential, if this is appropriate.</i>	<i>Acknowledge the person's strengths and how they have helped themselves.</i>
<i>Behave appropriately by considering the person's culture, age and gender</i>	<i>Allow for silence</i>
<i>Try to find a quiet place to talk, and minimize outside distractions.</i>	<i>Use – positive coping strategies and problem solving</i>
<i>Stay near the person if distressed but keep an appropriate distance depending on their age, gender and culture.</i>	<i>Above all let them know you are listening – use active listening strategies for example, nod your head or say "hmmmm...."</i>



# Things **not** to say and do:

Don't take over solving problems – upskill them to do this with your help.	Don't share the person's story with others
Don't exaggerate your skills	Don't judge the person for their actions or feelings
Don't force help on people, and don't be intrusive or pushy	Don't make false promises or give false information
Don't pressure people to tell you their story	Don't talk too much when listening.