

Psychological First Aid training for those supporting children and young people affected by COVID-19

Online training developed by PHE is now available to all those who care for or work with children and young people aged up to 25

Q&A

A) Is PFA the same as or comparable to Mental Health First Aid?

Psychological First Aid is different from Mental Health First Aid because it has been developed specifically for use in disasters and emergencies. It provides a framework for psychological support and care in emergency and crisis situations. Mental Health First Aid provides participants with the skills and confidence to recognise the signs and symptoms of common mental health issues.

The key difference here is that PFA is an evidenced based set of 4 stages that someone can use to support a person in an emergency or crisis situation. The learning outcomes are less focussed on mental health literacy, but more on identifying potential crises and emergencies, understanding how to have supportive conversations, and linking the person into support. This course does not look specifically at different types of mental health issues in the way MHFA does.

Further, this course is comparably shorter than MHFA (at 3 hours, depending on the users learning pace) and designed to be used as independent learning on the online platform. This will hopefully make it more accessible in emergency situations where time pressures may limit professionals from being able to engage with training resources.

The hope is that this course can be used before, during or after a crisis or emergency. An example situation might be if a teacher finds out one of their students has been moved into temporary accommodation due to a house fire in their home; the teacher could in theory engage with this course to prepare to have supportive conversations with their student. The focus here is not about the student's mental health, but rather about using the 4 stages of PFA to have psychologically supportive conversations that engages the student in the most appropriate support.

Lastly, because of the fundamental differences in this course to MHFA, users who have completed MHFA should find it as useful and engaging as someone who has not. The learning between the courses should be complementary and build on existing skill sets.

B) Is there a cost to this training?

The course is free to complete, but please note that this course has an option to receive a certificate for £32 once you have completed the course. You do not need to buy this certificate to complete the course modules.