



# PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID ECHO

KanDO Together: Supporting Resilient Communities

Thanks for joining us!

The session will begin on time.

# Psychological First Aid ECHO

## *Part I: What is PFA?*

Welcome!

- ▶ Your microphone has been **muted**. Please use the chat or unmute yourself to communicate.
- ▶ We appreciate you keeping your **camera** on.
- ▶ **Completion certificates** will be emailed after all sessions are complete. Make sure your first and last name are visible.
  - ▶ Use the “rename” feature in the menu to change.

# Presenters

Melissa Maras, Ph.D.



Joah Williams, Ph.D.



Erin Hambrick, Ph.D.



# Project Disclosure Statement

- ▶ We have no relevant financial relationships with the manufacturer(s) of any commercial product(s) and/or provider of commercial services discussed in this CME activity.
  
- ▶ We do not intend to discuss an unapproved/investigative use of a commercial product/device in our presentation.

# Mitigating Potential Bias

- ▶ The information and recommendations involving clinical medicine is based on evidence that is currently accepted within the profession.

# After the session

- ▶ Please read the PFA Manual Core Actions 1-3 (Contact & Engagement, Safety & Comfort, Stabilization) prior to the next training  
([https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/type/PFA/PFA\\_2ndEditionwithappendices.pdf](https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/type/PFA/PFA_2ndEditionwithappendices.pdf))
- ▶ Presentation materials: the slides and chat log will be emailed to you also.



# Defining Trauma



# Defining Trauma



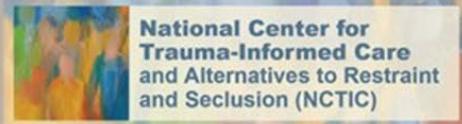
*trauma* comes from a Greek word meaning *wound*

# Defining Trauma



## 3 Es of Trauma

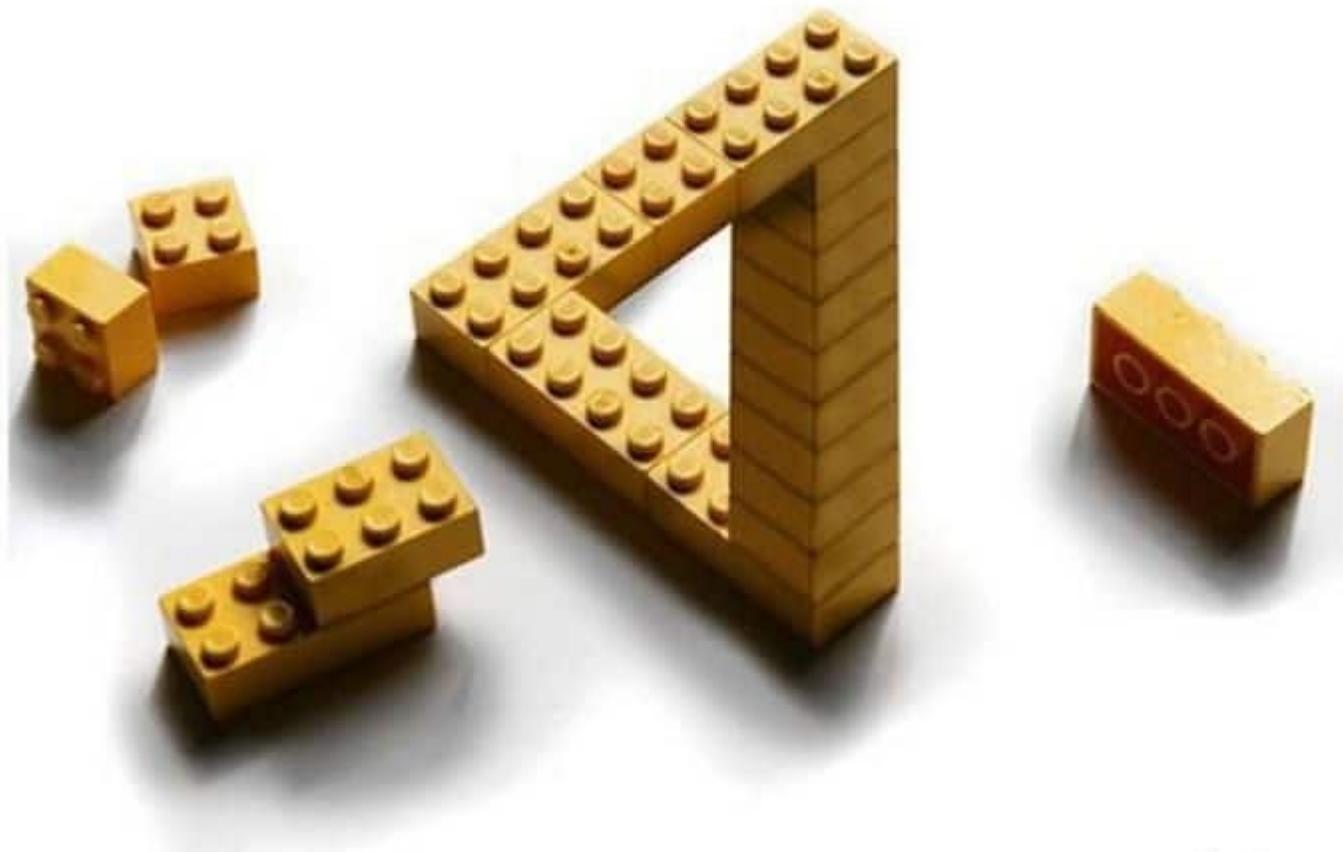
Individual trauma results from an **EVENT**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **EXPERIENCED** as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening; and that has lasting adverse **EFFECTS** on functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.



[Understanding Child Trauma](#) - National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative (SAMHSA)

[TIP 57: Trauma-Informed Care in Behavioral Health Services](#) (SAMHSA)

# Making sense of trauma





# Acute Trauma Reactions



- Intrusive thoughts
- Dissociative symptoms
- Avoidance
- Hyperarousal
- Sleep problems
- Irritability

# Risk Factors

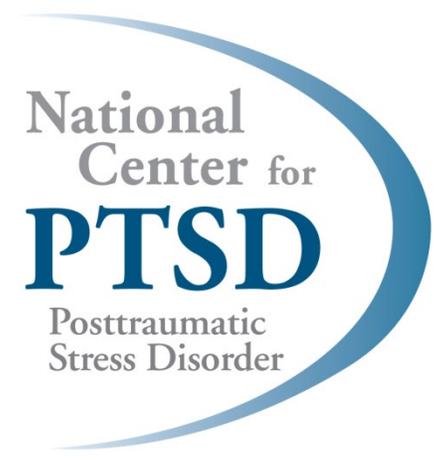
- Resource loss
- Isolation and withdrawal
- Extreme emotional distress
- Negative cognitions
- Poor social support



# Psychological First Aid

- Evidence-informed intervention
- Identify needs and provide immediate practical, social, and emotional support
- Can involve 1-3 contacts

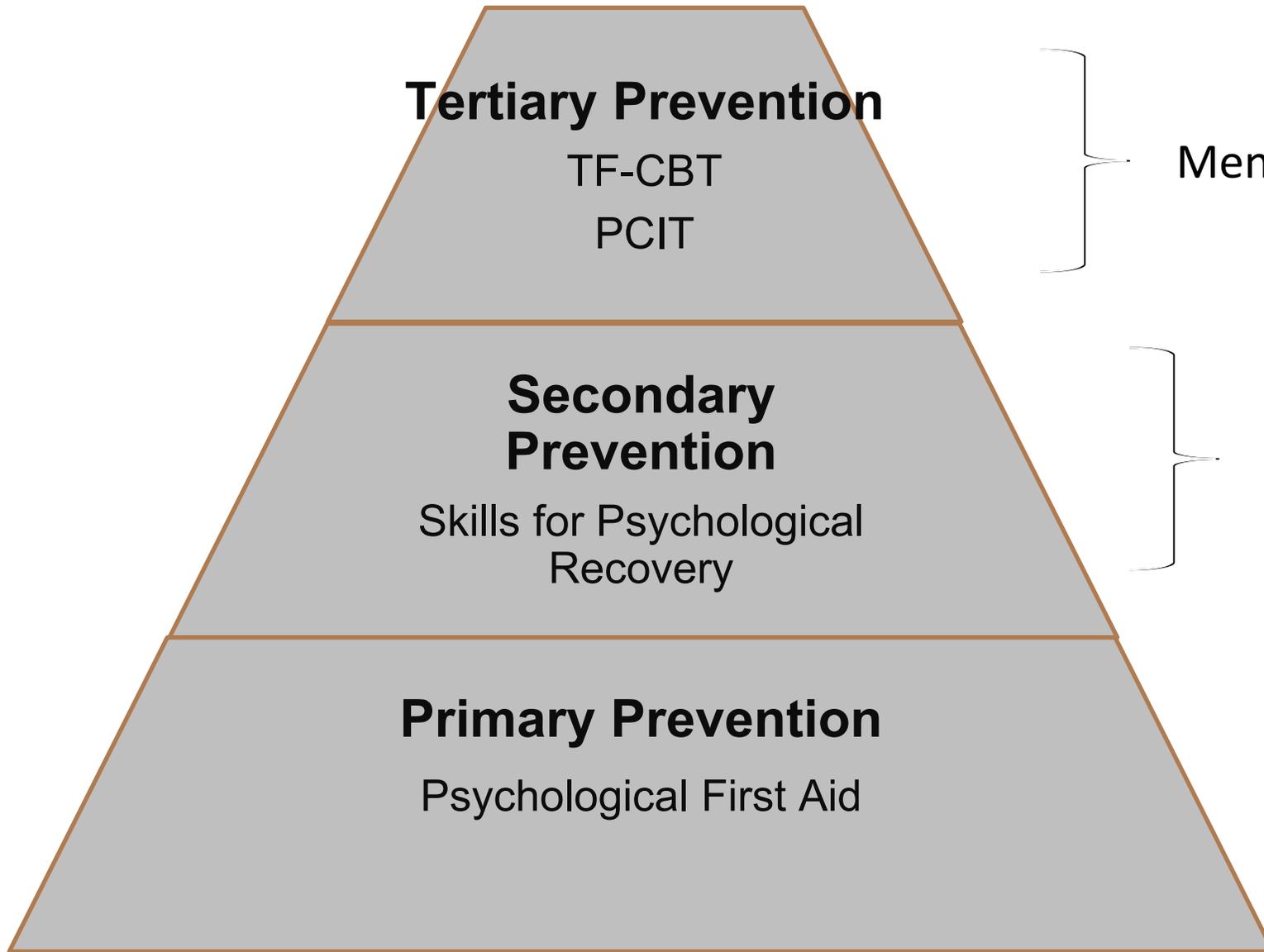
<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-pfa-field-operations-guide-2nd-edition>



National  
Center for  
**PTSD**  
Posttraumatic  
Stress Disorder



The National Child  
Traumatic Stress Network  
**NCTSN**



Mental health treatments

Interventions for youth and families who continue to experience elevated symptoms in the weeks and months post-disaster

Acute interventions available to all trauma-exposed youth and families

# Psychological First Aid vs. Mental Health First Aid

- Mental Health First Aid is a protocol that teaches participants to recognize and intervene when a person is developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of a mental health problem, or in a mental health crisis
- PFA is specific to helping people in the aftermath of a trauma or disaster

# Psychological Debriefing

- Originally designed for emergency services personnel
- Delivered within 24-72 hours
- Often delivered in a group format



# Psychological Debriefing

- Participants are encouraged to discuss details about the trauma and emotional reactions
- Debriefer normalizes symptoms
- Education regarding healthy coping



# Psychological Debriefing

Several studies have now concluded that PD is no more effective than no intervention at reducing trauma related symptoms and may *worsen* symptoms for some



# Who Can Deliver PFA?

PFA can be delivered by victim advocates, chaplains, and other professionals who provide early assistance to trauma and disaster-affected youth and families



# Where Can PFA Be Delivered?

PFA can be delivered in a variety of settings:

- Local police departments
- Hospitals
- Emergency departments
- Via phone

# Psychological First Aid

Some agencies that have adopted PFA for trauma and disaster survivors so far...



World Health  
Organization





Break  
5 minutes

# PFA Field Operations Guide Core Actions

1	Contact and Engagement
2	Safety and Comfort
3	Stabilization
4	Information Gathering
5	Practical Assistance
6	Connection with Social Supports
7	Information on Coping
8	Linkage with Collaborative Services

# PFA providers must have:

- Ability to work in chaotic and unpredictable environments
- Capacity for rapid assessment of survivors
- Ability to provide services tailored to context and culture
- Ability to tolerate intense distress and reactions
- Accept tasks that are not initially viewed as mental health activities
- Capacity for self-care (<https://www.nctsn.org/resources/prn-to-promote-wellbeing-as-needed-to-care-for-your-wellness>)

# Discussion Question

- After receiving PFA training, Fred was asked to respond to a tornado that has severely impacted a nearby county
- What should Fred consider before agreeing to the deployment?

# PFA Field Operations Guide Core Actions

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# Contact & Engagement

- ▶ Respect
- ▶ Sensitivity
- ▶ Empathy
- ▶ Warmth
- ▶ Encourage mutual trust



# Contact & Engagement

## DO

- Observe first
- Ask simple, respectful questions
- Speak calmly and slowly without jargon
- Acknowledge survivor strength

## AVOID

- Making assumptions about experiences
- Labeling reactions as “symptoms” or referring to diagnoses
- Talking down or patronizing

# Contact & Engagement

- ▶ Establish a connection in a *non-intrusive* and *compassionate* manner
- ▶ Introduce yourself and describe your role
- ▶ Ask for permission to talk
- ▶ Explain objectives
- ▶ Ask about immediate needs

# Sample Introductions

May I ask your name?

Mrs. Williams,  
before we talk, is there something right now that you need, like some water?

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm with Project Hope. I'm checking in with people to see how they are doing, and to see if I can help in any way. Is it okay if I talk to you for a few minutes?

# Working with Children

- ▶ For young children, sit or crouch at eye level
- ▶ For school-age children, provide simple labels for common emotional reactions
- ▶ Use direct and simple words; match language to developmental level (knowing it could be regressed right now)
- ▶ Check in for understanding
- ▶ Do not use extreme words like “terrified” or “horrified”
- ▶ Talk to adolescents “adult-to-adult”
- ▶ Avoid questioning, focus on parallel activities
- ▶ Model your techniques for the child’s parents/caregivers

# Breakout Rooms

**KanDO**

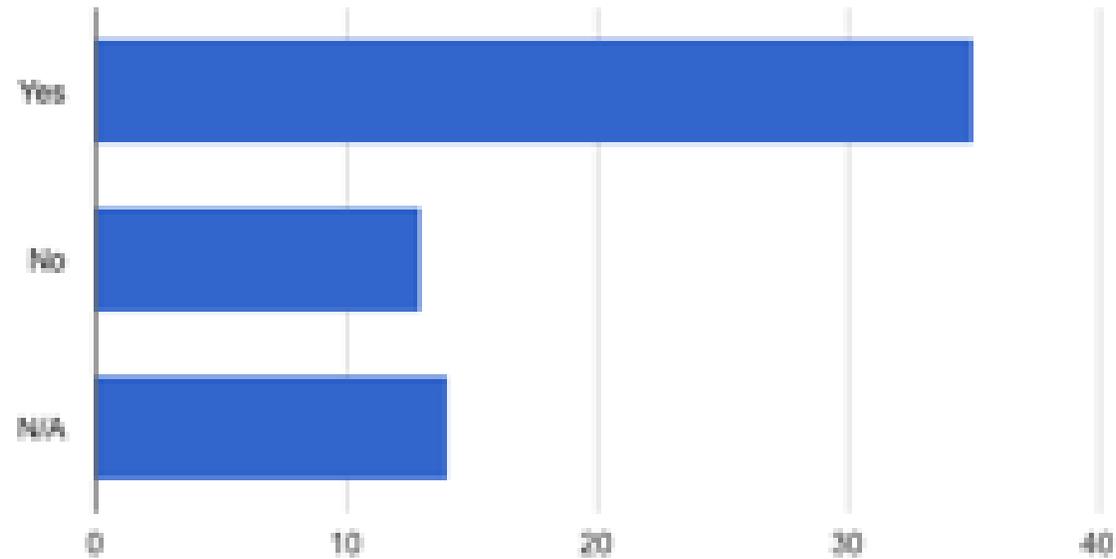
Kansas Disaster Outreach in Communities

# Breakout Room Wrap-up

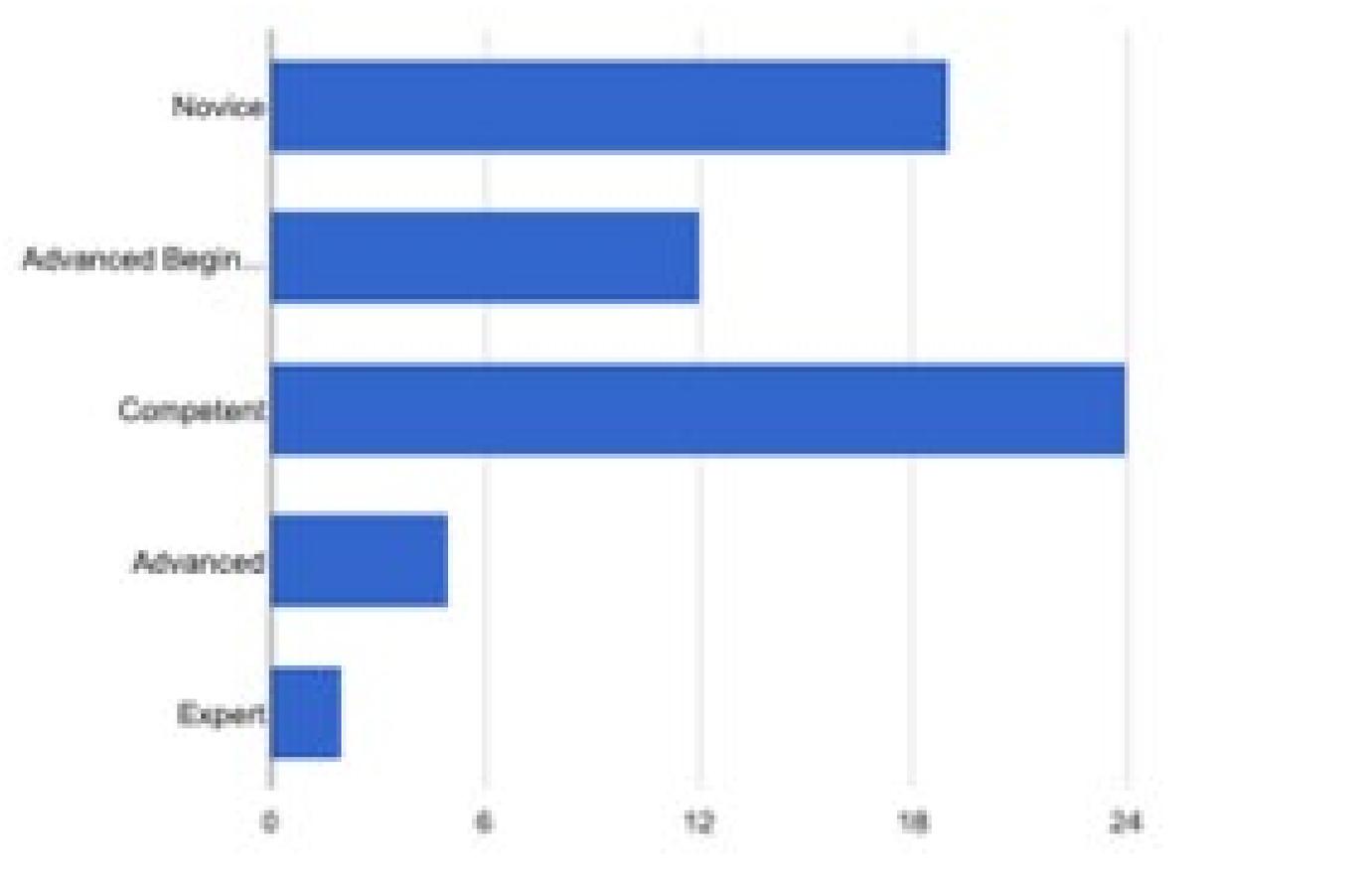
- Personal contact varies from person to person and across social groups and is “state dependent”
- If you are not familiar with the culture of the survivor, do not:
  - Approach too closely
  - Make prolonged eye contact
  - Touch

# Scenarios & Surveys

# 1. I need help assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current disaster response protocol of the organization that I am affiliated with



## 9. My level of expertise related to working with children and families in the early aftermath of trauma exposure:



# Word Cloud

- ▶ What is a word you leave reflecting on today?
- ▶ Click the link in the chat
  - ▶ You can skip entering your name
  - ▶ Multiple words must be typed without a space
    - ▶ Example: Type “wordcloud” instead of “word cloud”

# Questions

- ▶ Please type your questions in the chat



# Thank you for attending!

Slides and materials will be sent to your email.