

# Facilitation Guide – Psychological First Aid for Foster Families



## *About this training:*

This training has been designed for social workers in Moldova who are working with foster families caring for unaccompanied and separated children and adolescents who have fled the crisis in Ukraine. This guide and its accompanying slides use a psychological first aid framework based on upon the World Health Organization’s Psychological First Aide Guide for Field Workers (2011). The content also integrates trauma-informed principles (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (2014) and information from Parenting a Child who has Experienced Trauma from the Child Welfare Information Gateway (2014).

The guide has been designed so that it can be offered online or in person and should be led by staff who have a foundational understanding of psychosocial support (PSS) skills, but who would also benefit from a framework on how to approach PSS in an emergency setting.

Finally, it is important to note that the structure of facilitation draws upon adult learning principles to ensure effective engagement of participants. The presentation structure purposefully engages participants through questions, seeking to draw up on their experience and ensure relevance. Facilitators should use this method to engage learners, encourage sharing, and build on existing knowledge, rather relying on lecture.

**Time Required:**

6 – 6 ½ hours

**Key Objectives:**

- To build knowledge on key concepts such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma
- To build skills on how to identify when a child or adolescent is struggling (look) and how to respond appropriately (listen)
- To provide clarity on support services for foster families (link)

**Preparation + Recommended materials:**

- For virtual trainings, facilitator should decide how to collect feedback and what additional software or forms will be needed in advance of the training. Two common options are Menti + Jamboard. Accordingly, polls, boards, links should all be set up in advance.
- For in-person trainings: Flipcharts, sticky notes, markers, pens, projector, handouts (scenarios, what to do/not to do sheet, common distress reactions by age)
- All: PPT slide deck, creating a supportive environment worksheet, role play scenarios, sample comforting techniques, and self-care planning worksheet

*Facilitation Notes*

**Session 1: Establishing a common foundation of key concepts**  
80 minutes

Time	Method	Facilitation Notes
15 minutes	Opening Introductions	+ <b>Introduce</b> self as a facilitator (adapt slide) + <b>review</b> key objectives for the session
20 minutes	Group work	<b>Share</b> slide on key terms – (Psychological First Aid, Adverse Childhood Experiences + Trauma, Protection + Trauma-informed Care) <u>What do these terms mean to you? (15 minutes)</u> <b>For in-person</b> participants: <b>assign</b> a concept or pair of concepts to each group (3) and <b>ask</b> them to discuss and write-down their agreed upon definition and <b>share</b> using sticky notes or JamBoard, Menti, verbally, chat, if hybrid).  <b>For on-line</b> participants: <b>assign</b> a concept to each person or breakout room and <b>ask</b> them to discuss and write-down their

		<p>agreed upon definition and <b>share</b> using sticky notes or JamBoard, Menti, verbally, chat, if hybrid).</p> <p><b>Review</b> the key points for each concept.</p>
<p><b>30 minutes</b></p>	<p>Present Key Concepts + Plenary discussions built-in</p>	<p><b>Share</b> slides on the following, building on what has already been shared by the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is PFA (as it relates to what foster families will do)</li> <li>• What PFA is NOT</li> <li>• ACEs (what they are + how accumulate to impact individuals)</li> </ul> <p><b>Ask</b> the group to share ideas on “What types of adverse childhood experiences do you think children and youth coming out of Ukraine are likely to have experienced?”</p> <p><i>Note: Depending on time, might limit to 2-3 responses.</i></p> <p><i>May share that in a 2015 Survey on Child Abuse in Ukraine -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 65 % aged 12–17 had been exposed to some form of violence</li> <li>- 45 % had suffered from emotional abuse</li> <li>- 27 % had experienced physical abuse</li> </ul> <p><i>Connect the idea that having these previous experiences puts children and youth more at risk when they then suffer from traumatic experiences caused by the Ukraine crisis.</i></p> <p><b>Ask</b> 1-2 people from the group to share what they understand from the word trauma.</p> <p><b>Share</b> slide with the definition of trauma.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> the group “Why are these concepts important to understand? <b>Share the slide</b> on shifting our approach – from one of “what’s wrong with you” to one of understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying Trauma-informed Principles – highlight key considerations only + checking for clarification.</li> </ul> <p><b>Share</b> the following definition of protection: “The prevention and response to abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence against children and vulnerable adults” then <b>ask</b> “What are some risks that come to your mind specifically for these children (UASC fleeing Ukraine)?</p> <p><b>Share</b> slide on some of the information that have gathered from assessments, listening to partners, working groups.</p>

15 minutes	Presentation + Individual Reflection	<p><b>Tell</b> the group that we want to start thinking now about what this looks like in practice.</p> <p><b>Share</b> the trauma-informed reflection questions. <b>Ask</b> the group for a response to 3-4 of them depending on time.</p> <p><b>Share</b> the slides on “do no harm”.</p> <p><i>(Individual reflection 10 minutes)</i></p> <p><b>Share</b> the worksheet on creating a safe and supportive environment and <b>ask</b> the question “What does a safe and supportive environment mean to you?” <b>Allow time to reflect and make notes</b> and <b>ask</b> a few volunteers to share.</p>
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Session 2: LOOK  
55 minutes

10 minutes	Stretch/Coffee	<p><b>Lead a quick “brain break”</b></p> <p>Some ideas to choose from (or make up your own!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put on some music and do a quick dance together</li> <li>• 5-4-3-2-1 – Lead a movement for people to repeat 5 times, choose a different movement to repeat 4 times, choose a different movement to repeat 3 times, etc.</li> <li>• 3 quick yoga poses</li> <li>• Find it fast (Look around the room and give 30 seconds to find --- something white, something soft, etc) + Hold it up at the end; Can repeat 2-3 times</li> <li>• Doodle – given everyone 2 minutes to doodle something (a flower, a butterfly, a cat, etc) and then hold up to share</li> <li>• Breathing exercise – read a poem or simply lead deep breathing (in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4)</li> </ul>
30 minutes	<p>Present with questions for reflection discussion +</p> <p>Group activity on distress</p>	<p><b>Share</b> slide on the PFA Actions (Look, Listen, Link) and explain that this is how we can frame our approach in supporting children and youth and we will break this down one-by-one</p> <p><b>Share slide on responses to crisis events - Ask</b> – What factors influence how someone responds in a crisis?</p> <p><b>Highlight</b> the following for the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>»» Their experience with previous distressing events</li> <li>»» The support they have in their life from others</li> <li>»» Their physical health</li> <li>»» Their personal and family history of mental health problems</li> </ul>

		<p>»» Their cultural background and traditions          »» Their age (for example, children of different age groups react differently).</p> <p><b>Share</b> slide and <b>ask</b> “What does serious distress look like” for various age-groups (0-5 years, 6-12 years, and 13-17 years).</p> <p><b>Tell</b> the group that this will be a quick brainstorm and not to spend too much time overthinking it.</p> <p><u>Group discussion (10 minutes)</u>  <b>For in-person</b> participants: <b>assign</b> a concept or pair of concepts to each group (3) and <b>ask</b> them to discuss and write-down their agreed upon definition and <b>share</b> using sticky notes or JamBoard, Menti, verbally, chat, if hybrid).</p> <p><b>For on-line</b> participants: <b>assign</b> a concept to each person or breakout room and <b>ask</b> them to discuss and write-down their agreed upon definition and <b>share</b> using sticky notes or JamBoard, Menti, verbally, chat, if hybrid).</p> <p><b>Review</b> the notes briefly and then <b>review</b> the following slides, highlighting any points that have been missed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0-5 years</li> <li>- 6-12 years</li> <li>- 13-18 years</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: Remind the group that some of these signs show that a person is more “activated” but other times it can appear that the person is “shut-down”. It is important to pay attention to both.</i></p> <p><b>Ask</b> the group – what if the child or youth just has one of these, or does it only one time?</p> <p><b>Note</b> that this is about looking for behaviors that compromise safety or that are patterns that become concerning. If in doubt, they should ask the social worker!</p>
15 minutes	Final reflection + discussion on additional considerations	<p><b>Share slide + ask</b> What other risks should we look for during an emergency? Note some of the key issues that are coming up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language barriers</li> <li>- Access to communication (SIM, Internet) -- social media</li> <li>- Discrimination by peers/bullying</li> <li>- Lack of access for people with disabilities (ramps, showers/bathrooms, sleeping)</li> <li>- Privacy issues among family members</li> <li>- Lack options connect with bio family</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health risks/COVID</li> <li>- Lack of documentation</li> <li>- Feelings of guilt/shame</li> </ul> <p><b>Tell the group:</b> Remember that if the child or adolescent is doing something that compromises their safety, this needs to be addressed urgently.</p> <p><b>Share slide + ask:</b> Who might require additional special assistance to access services?</p> <p>“Especially vulnerable” - help to access services...help to be safe from violence or exploitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People with chronic health conditions or disabilities (pregnant women, elderly, blind, deaf, immobile people)</li> <li>- People at risk of discrimination or violence (women, people of certain ethnic groups)</li> </ul>
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### Session 3: LISTEN 2 hours

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20 minutes	Plenary discussion	<p><b>Share</b> and introduce “Listen” and its key concepts.</p> <p><b>Share</b> next slide and <b>ask</b> “What tips do you have for good communication?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For primary school children?</li> <li>- For teenagers</li> </ul> <p><b>Ask</b> What are some anticipated challenges?</p> <p><b>Ask</b> participants to share ideas either verbally (or in the chat) going one by one.</p> <p><b>Tell</b> the group that we are going to review the “Dos” and they should note if there is something missing from the list that they can add at the end.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> for additions.</p> <p><b>Share</b> slide on “Don’ts”</p>
30 minutes	Role Plays	<p><b>Divide</b> participants into pairs and trios (whether in-person or online), <b>explaining</b> to them that we will do a roleplay to practice listening skills.</p> <p><b>Assign a scenario</b> to each pair/trio (repeating is okay). Let them know that they will each have 10 minutes acting as the “foster caregiver” and then they will switch roles for another 10 minutes.</p>

**ONE:** Three siblings of 4, 5 and 16 years of age, all of them with disabilities, were placed in foster care in Moldova. One of the children has a developmental disability. Previous to arriving in Moldova, they had been living with their father in small quiet village. Though they had a very close relationship with him, the father used to drink a lot and would sometimes yell at the children. It is the second day that the children are in your home and the 16-year-old suddenly yells at his younger siblings at the dinner table. It is not clear why he is so upset. How do you respond?

**TWO:** A 14-year old Roma girl crosses into Moldova with her older boyfriend but they are separated. He decides to travel onwards without her to another country. The girl is placed into foster care. After a month of mostly staying in her room and speaking very little to you, she tells you that she is unhappy and wants to leave. How do you respond?

**THREE:** Two siblings who are 3 and 5 years old witnessed bombings and heard lots of fighting and gunfire while in Ukraine. Their parents decided to send them with a family friend to Moldova. When they arrived, they were placed in foster care. One day your biological son, who is 7-years old is playing with the 5-year old. Suddenly there is a loud popping sound outside. The 5-year old starts to cry uncontrollably and your biological son gets upset and says that he should stop being such a “baby”. How do you respond?

**FOUR:** A sixteen-year-old boy is in your care. He has not spoken much except simple yes or no questions for the first three days. Then, out of the blue, he tells you that his best friend dies in a bombing, and he did not have the chance to go to his funeral. He says that he knew this friend since they were children and is not sure what he will do without him. How do you respond?

**FIVE:** A 10-year-old child who lost both of her parents at a very age and who was living with her grandmother has just arrived in Moldova. Her grandmother remained behind and sent her with a group of people from the village. Now that she is in foster care, she does not want to leave her room and often refuses meals. One morning she comes down for breakfast and has clearly been crying again. How do you respond?

		<p><b>SIX:</b> Two siblings are placed in your home. The older sibling is 15-years old, and the younger is 12-years old. Before arriving to Moldova, they had been living with their aunt. The aunt decided to send the children with a church group because she thought they would be safer outside of the country. However, the children were left behind by the group, who traveled onward to Romania. The older sibling is very protective over the younger child and gets anxious when he is playing football with other children. One day, you give permission for the 12-year-old to attend an after-school event held by a local NGO. The older sibling stays at home, but it is clear that she cannot relax. She is not able to sit still and appears very agitated. How do you respond?</p> <p><b>Ask</b> each person to reflect on the following questions to be prepared to share in plenary:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What did you notice and appreciate about your partner’s listening skills?</li> <li>2) What is one thing that you might have done differently?</li> </ol>
15 minutes	Role Play Debrief	<p>Explain to the group that we will not go one-by-one asking for tips, but that we will share in plenary some of the “good practices” that we saw during the role plays.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> the group to share some things that they noticed and appreciated about their partner’s listening skills.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> the group to share what they might do differently in the future, if given the chance.</p>
15 minutes	Plenary Discussion	<p><b>Ask</b> the group to define what they understand by the word confidentiality.</p> <p>Then, <b>ask</b> why is it important?</p> <p><i>Note:</i>  <i>It establishes trusting relationships.</i>  <i>Children want to fit in.</i>  <i>Helps child free respected.</i></p> <p>Next, <b>ask</b> what this looks like in practice – or more specifically, “What tips do you have to maintain confidentiality when friends or family ask about your foster child, or when you are in social situations? “</p> <p><i>Note: Share any tips that were not mentioned by the group.</i></p>



		<p><i>TIPS</i></p> <p><i>How to respond to questions?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>It's not my story to tell.</i></li> <li>- <i>Redirect --- Talk about yourself and why you wanted to become a foster parent.</i></li> <li>- <i>Change the subject</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Other guidelines/tips:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Introduce the child by their first name only – not singling out that a “foster child”</i></li> <li>- <i>Only share details with those authorized to receive it</i></li> <li>- <i>Re-direct your own children if you hear them sharing too much detail with others</i></li> </ul>
25 minutes	Discussion + Role Plays	<p><b>Ask</b> the group to imagine that their child is in distress – perhaps they are angry and yelling, or perhaps they are crying uncontrollably.</p> <p><b>Ask:</b> “What are ‘comforting’ techniques that you can use to help someone in distress?”</p> <p><b>Share the following points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep your own voice soft and calm</li> <li>- Reassure the person that you are there to support through body language and reflective listening (I see that you are really upset right now, but I want to support you).</li> <li>- Ask for permission if the person is very upset before starting on a grounding technique. Remember to go slow and give the person time and choice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Share some examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Breathing:</b> Offer to take a few deep breaths with the person. As you breathe in, move your arms up, as you breathe out move arms down.</li> <li>- <b>5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1:</b> Name 5 things you see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can task</li> <li>- <b>Physical release:</b> Jump up and down, run hands through cold water, squeeze a ball or some object</li> </ul> <p><b>Explain</b> to the group that these should ideally be things that you practice regularly, not just in the most serious moments.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> participants to again work in pairs or trios (whether online or in-person) and practice at least one of the grounding techniques provided. The participants can refer to scenarios one, three, or six for ideas on the types of reactions that they might use this for (anger, crying, anxiety).</p> <p><b>Check</b> if there are final questions.</p>

15 minutes	Presentation	<p><b>Share</b> slides that review final ideas of how to engage the family + to provide stability through various ideas.</p> <p><b>Check</b> again for final questions to close the “Listen” session.</p>
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## Session 4: LINK, Self-Care, and Close 60 minutes

5-10 minutes	Brain Break/Coffee	<p>Some ideas to choose from (or make up your own!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put on some music and do a quick dance together</li> <li>• 5-4-3-2-1 – Lead a movement for people to repeat 5 times, choose a different movement to repeat 4 times, choose a different movement to repeat 3 times, etc.</li> <li>• 3 quick yoga poses</li> <li>• Find it fast (Look around the room and give 30 seconds to find --- something white, something soft, etc) + Hold it up at the end; Can repeat 2-3 times</li> <li>• Doodle – given everyone 2 minutes to doodle something (a flower, a butterfly, a cat, etc) and then hold up to share</li> <li>• Breathing exercise – read a poem or simply lead deep breathing (in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4)</li> </ul>
5 minutes	Present	<p><b>Share</b> information on the process that the foster parents can expect in terms of support in identifying and responding to needs of children and how to link to services.</p>
25 minutes	Plenary	<p><b>Share</b> the slide on engaging family members and allow each person some time to reflect on they might do this.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> if there are volunteers to share some ideas with the group.</p> <p><b>Ask</b> what challenges might be, drawing from those who have already had foster care children in their home to share.</p> <p><i>Note: Remember to focus on tips and solutions.</i></p> <p><i>Tips:</i></p> <p><i>Be honest and realistic about the relationship expectations.</i></p> <p><i>Be patient.</i></p> <p><i>Creating roles + responsibilities for different members of the HH can help establish a sense of unity.</i></p> <p><i>Family activities together – routines that establish a sense of predictability</i></p> <p><i>Seeking support from social worker when need it</i></p> <p><i>Encourage children to play with each other</i></p> <p><i>Focus on positive rules for discipline if needed</i></p>

20 minutes	Plenary Individual Reflection	<p>+ <b>Share</b> the slide and quote “You can’t pour out of an empty cup” and <b>ask</b> for ideas on what it means.</p> <p><b>Share</b> the handout on selfcare and <b>ask</b> each individual to think through it on their own, making notes:</p> <p><u>Reflection worksheet (individual)</u>          What are three small things that you do to help yourself feel calm?          How often can you do those?          Who are three people that you can turn to for support?          What are two positive messages that you can tell yourself that help you feel better when times are tough?</p> <p><b>Ask</b> if there are final questions or ideas to discuss on this point?</p>
5 minutes	Survey	<p><b>Launch</b> quick feedback survey online or using sticky notes to ask the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What was most useful about this workshop?</li> <li>- What was least useful?</li> <li>- What questions do you still have?</li> <li>- On a scale of 0 – 10 how confident do you feel about applying the skills that you have learned today (0 not at all 10 = Extremely)</li> </ul> <p>Close</p>

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