

WHERE CLASSICAL WISDOM MEETS INTELLIGENT LEARNING

Chapter 7. Part 3. Disaster Preparedness

Chapter 7: Environmental and Situational Emergencies

Part 3: Disaster Preparedness

(Understanding how to provide first aid and emotional support in disaster situations such as earthquakes, floods, fires, and more.)

What is a Disaster?

A disaster is a sudden event—natural or man-made—that causes widespread damage, injury, and loss of life. Examples include:

- Natural: Earthquakes, floods, cyclones, landslides, droughts
- Man-made: Fires, building collapses, chemical spills, terrorist attacks

In such events, professional help may be delayed. **Trained first aiders can make a critical difference** in survival and recovery.

2. First Aid in Disaster Scenarios

A. General Priorities in Any Disaster:

- 1. Ensure your own safety first (e.g., falling debris, live wires)
- 2. Call for emergency help (112 in India)
- 3. Perform triage assess who needs immediate help

B. Disaster-Specific First Aid Actions

△ Earthquakes:

- Evacuate if safe or stay in a "triangle of life" (under a table, near a wall)
- Treat bleeding, fractures, crush injuries
- Be aware of aftershocks

☐ Floods:

- Help victims reach high ground
- Watch for drowning, hypothermia, snakebites
- Boil drinking water; risk of water-borne disease

☐ Fires:

- Assist in evacuation using low-crawl technique
- Cool burns with water, do not remove melted clothing
- Avoid smoke inhalation—cover nose/mouth with cloth

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$\ \square$ Cyclones / Storms:

- Shelter indoors; close windows
- Watch for head trauma, falling trees, electrocution
- · Keep dry and warm post-storm

3. Triage in Disaster Situations

Triage means sorting victims based on urgency of care:

Category	Color Code	Example	Action	
Immediate	Red	Major bleeding, airway bloc	k Treat first	
Delayed	Yellow	Fracture, conscious burn	Treat secondarily	
Minor	Green	Bruises, walking wounded	Help them assist others	
Deceased/expectar	nt Black	No pulse, severe trauma	Do not spend time here firs	t

4. Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Disasters cause not only physical harm but **emotional trauma**—fear, anxiety, grief, or shock. Psychological First Aid (PFA) is **not counselling**, but immediate emotional support to help the person feel safe, calm, and connected.

A. Goals of PFA:

- Reduce distress
- Stabilize the individual
- Support coping and functioning
- Refer to mental health support if needed

B. Key Principles (The 5 "L"s of PFA):

- 1. Look Observe for signs of trauma or shock
- 2. **Listen** Let them share, without judgment
- 3. Link Connect them to services, family, or shelter
- 4. **Live** Encourage returning to normal routines
- 5. Learn Provide factual, reassuring information

C. Common Signs of Psychological Distress:

- · Confusion, blank stare
- Crying, trembling
- Aggressive outbursts
- Withdrawal, silence
- Physical symptoms: headache, stomach upset

D. How to Help:

- Speak calmly and slowly
- Use their **name**, ensure safety

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- Offer water, a blanket—basic comfort
- Be present—don't leave them alone
- Avoid false reassurance like "Everything will be fine"
 - ☐ Children and elderly are especially vulnerable. Offer more time, touch (with consent), and security.

5. Self-Check Questions

- 1. What is the first action to take when reaching a disaster scene?
- 2. Name one critical difference in first aid for flood victims.
- 3. What does PFA stand for?
- 4. In triage, who gets a red tag?
- 5. Should you promise that "everything will be okay" during a crisis?

ANSWERS:

- 1. Ensure your own safety
- 2. Risk of waterborne diseases—boil water
- 3. Psychological First Aid
- 4. Life-threatening injuries needing urgent care
- 5. No—offer realistic support, not false promises

☐ Key Take-Home Points

- Disaster preparedness is not just about bandages—it's about calm, structured action under pressure.
- Learn to **prioritize victims** and give lifesaving care before professional help arrives.
- PFA helps prevent long-term emotional harm after trauma.
- Always work as a team and be aware of post-disaster hazards (infection, collapse, shock).

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