



Qualitative Evaluation of WHO Supported Psychological First Aid Training in Kashmir

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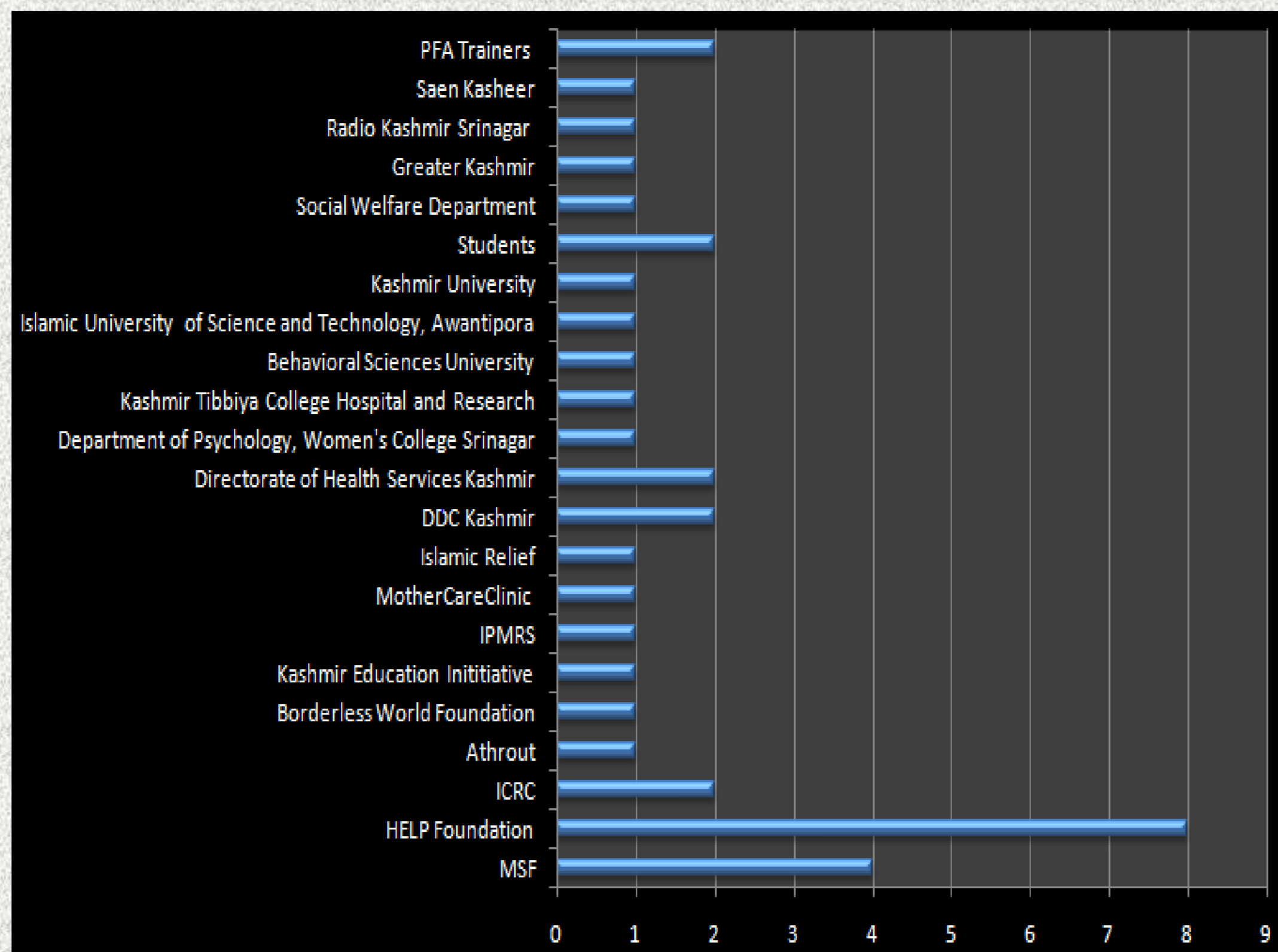


Introduction

In view of the political turmoil in Kashmir in 2016 which lasted for more than five months, HELP Foundation, a renowned local NGO, working in Kashmir, and chaired by Mrs. Nighat Shafi Pandit, invited Dr. Sayed Aqeel Hussain, Consultant Psychiatrist at UK through Dr. Mohammad Muzaffar Khan, Consultant Clinical Psychologist at Kashmir, to conduct one day Psychological First Aid training in collaboration with directorate of health services Kashmir, using the WHO devised PFA module. The workshop was conducted as part of MOU signed between RCPsych London and Health and Medical Education department of Kashmir. The PFA training was incorporated into the MOU by Dr. Sayed Aqeel Hussain on the recommendation of Dr. Shekhar Saxena, Director WHO, Mental and Substance Misuse and Head of mh-GAP programme. Dr. Saxena was also responsible for supervising the formulation of PFA by WHO and also for implementing the 2013-2020, WHO global mental health action plan around the world.

The PFA training was the fifth training programme conducted in collaboration with Royal College of Psychiatrists London and Health and Medical Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir, with support from WHO Geneva.

Proportion of attendees representing various organizations (n=40)



Aims and Objectives

To train all the relevant organizations, (local, national and international), both of Government and Private Sector working on ground to help the people of Kashmir to deal with the crisis situation, prevalent at that time in Kashmir, using WHO devised, validated and tested PFA module.

Trainers & Trainees

The training was delivered by Dr. Sayed Aqeel Hussain, (FRCPsych), Consultant Psychiatrist and master trainer for mh-GAP module devised by WHO and Mohammad Muzaffar Khan, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and mh-GAP trainer in Kashmir at HELP Foundation head quarters Kashmir.

The trainees included members from various private organizations including HELP Foundation, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Médecins sans frontières (MSF), Borderless World Foundation, Kashmir Education Initiative, Local NGOs including Athrout, IPMRS (a local physiotherapy center), Mothercare Clinic and Islamic Relief. It also included participants from Drug De-addiction Center Police control Room Srinagar, Department of Psychology, Women's College Srinagar, Kashmir Tibbiya College Hospital and Research, Behavioral Sciences University, Islamic University of Science and Technology, Awantipora, Kashmir Tibbiya College Hospital and Research, Behavioral Sciences University, Department of Psychology, Women's College Srinagar, Directorate of Health Services Kashmir, DDC Kashmir, Islamic Relief, MotherCareClinic, IPMRS, Kashmir Education Initiative, Borderless World Foundation, Athrout, ICRC, HELP Foundation, MSF.

PFA preserving dignity in crisis response

Crisis events involving exposure to trauma and sudden loss occur in all communities of the world. Orientation in PFA gives responders a framework for how to respond in a natural, supportive, practical manner. A common mistake in current humanitarian responses in many countries is to only make psychological first aid available in the absence of other care. Psychological first aid is feasible and appropriate during crises and should be complemented with other essential mental health and psychosocial activities.

Tweet by WHO

The #mhGAP implementation Kashmir team is unstoppable! New pics & resources [mhinnovation.net/innovations/mh...](https://www.mhinnovation.net/innovations/mh...) @sayedhussain92



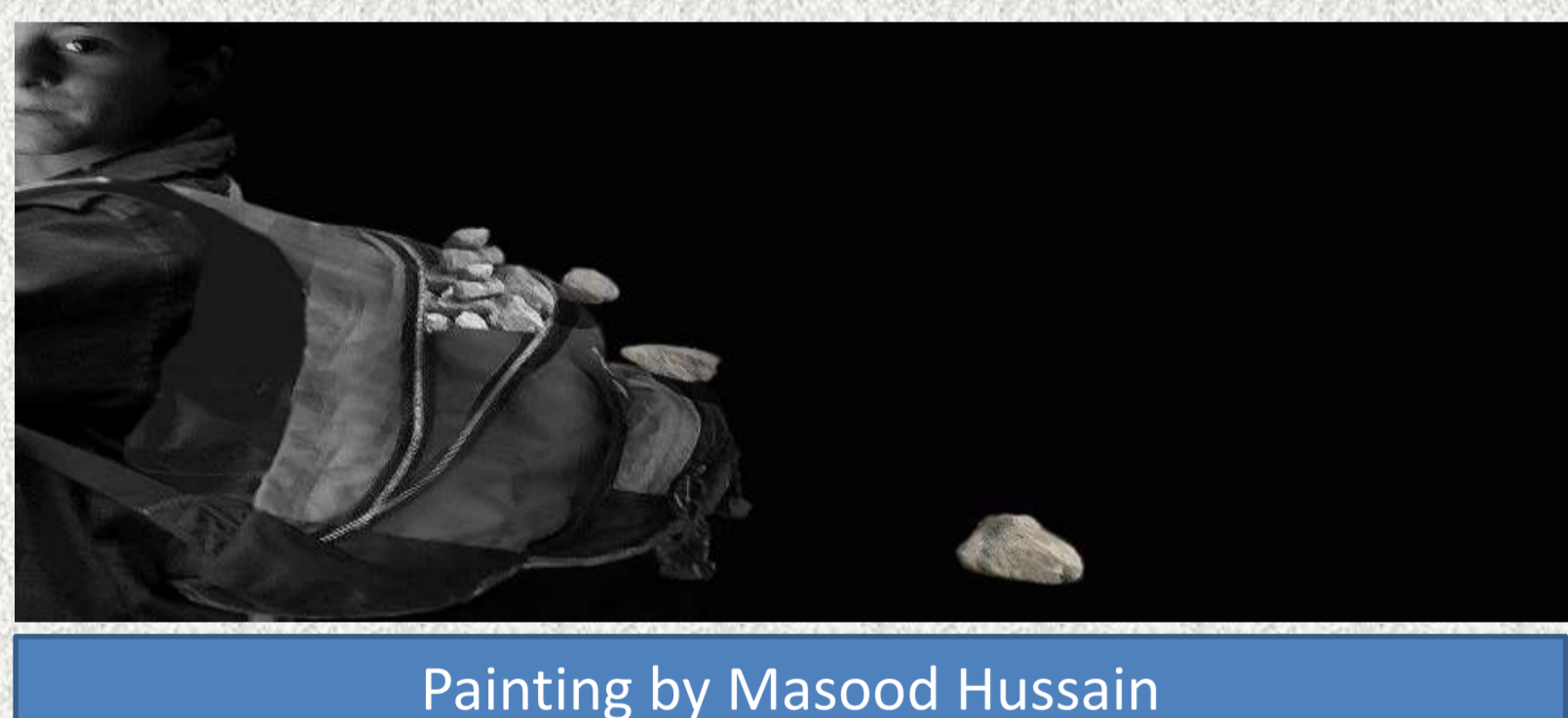
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Collaborating partners of PFA Kashmir



Important highlights from workshop

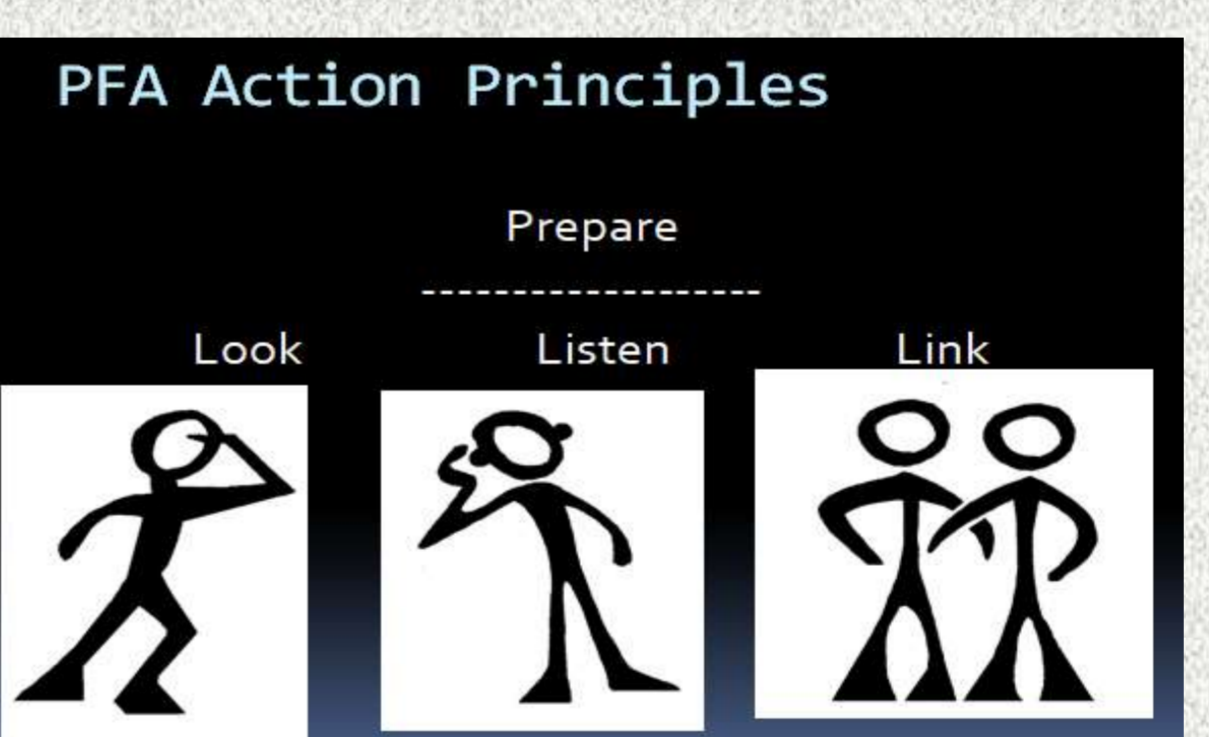
The workshop started with discussion on the political turmoil in Kashmir and the impact of the situation in the community. Various physical, social and psychological reactions experienced by the traumatized victims were discussed. Participants shared the importance of providing the basic necessities and supporting the people. Prioritizing help on the basis of PFA pyramid was discussed. The participants expressed their views on what PFA means. The participants felt that the issue of suspicion was the major stumbling block in providing help.



Painting by Masood Hussain



Glimpses from First mh-GAP training



Painting by Masood Hussain

Implementing PFA model in Kashmir context

The principles of LOOK, LISTEN and LINK were discussed in the cultural context. The various signs and symptoms as per the LOOK principle were discussed which included distressed children, children trying to imitate distressing behaviour, abnormal body sensations, depression and anxiety, uncontrolled hypertension, fatigue and helplessness, numbness of senses, panic attack, shouting and crying, aggression. The participants also discussed the impact of the situation prevalent in Kashmir, which included people feeling dejected with regards to their career, restricted their movement, less social exchange, unable to offer daily congregational prayers, lack of psychosocial support, exams not conducted, not much support around initially except by volunteers which was inadequate. Participants discussed the LISTEN principle and highlighted the need to listen more and talk less which was one of the common approach to help people in the Kashmiri culture. This was followed by discussion of proper way of listening and why that was very important principle in the overall implementation of PFA model. Role play was used to demonstrate Do's and DONT'S of good communication. Participants also discussed the LINK principle where the participants who were of diverse background shared the availability of all possible resources and organizations who could help as required in the LINK principle of PFA.

Various positive and negative coping strategies

Various positive coping strategies that were shared by participants included:
Increase in religious activities and cultural rituals.
Visiting shrines.
Attributing it as something that has come from Almighty.
Applying turmeric to forehead to relieve distress.
Reassuring each other.
Hugging and holding hands.
Various negative coping strategies that were shared by participants included:
Over protectiveness.
Shouting and crying.
Anger and aggression.

Evaluation of PFA training

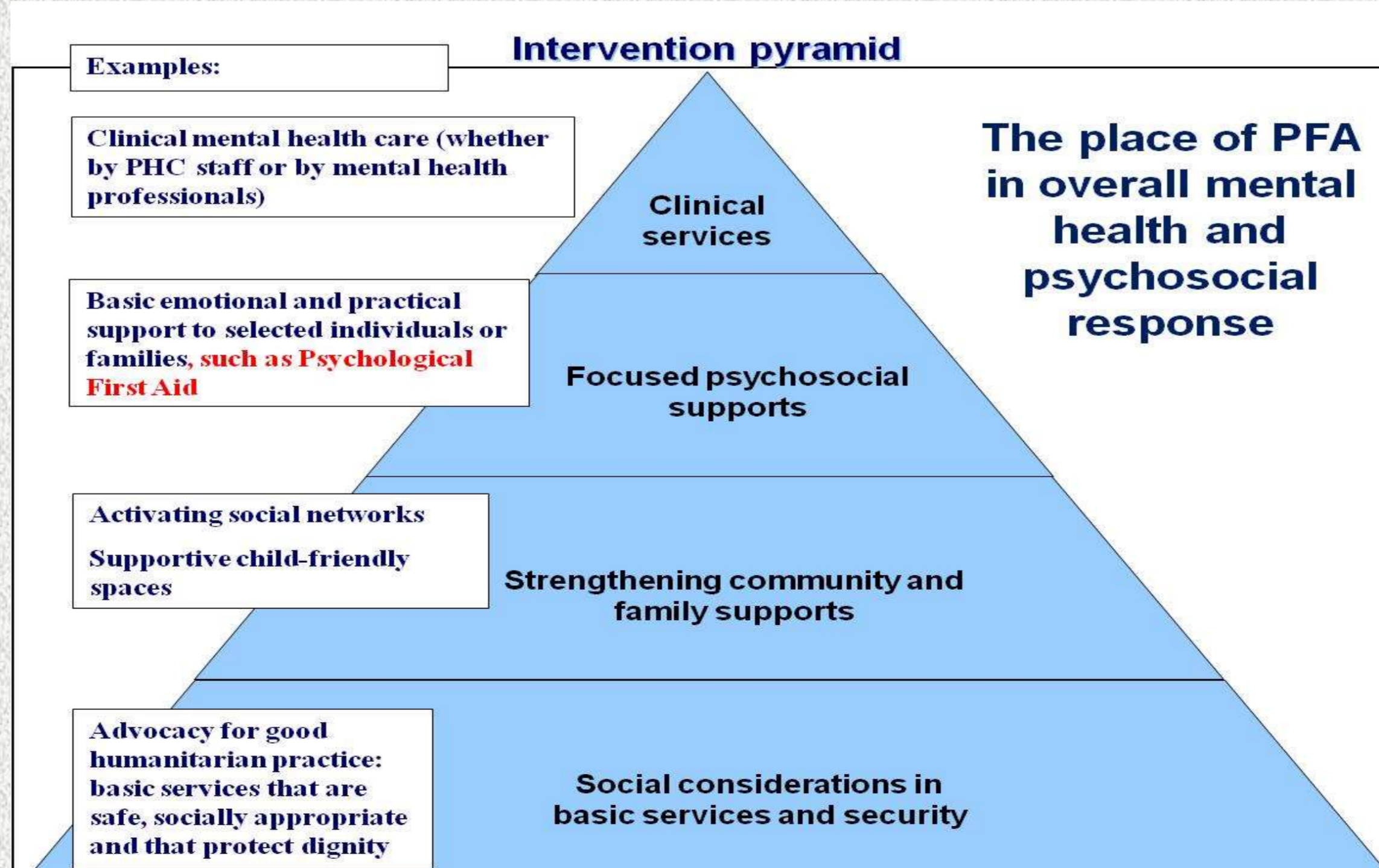
The participants felt that they learnt how to reach out to people in distress in prevalent political turmoil. They understood the need to have good listening skills and to empathize to understand the victim's situation. The ways, methods and prospects used in the workshop were nice and useful. The role play, Do's and DONT'S of communication were found to be very useful by the participants. The pyramid of interaction helped the participants to understand their role in the overall scheme of helping people in need. Participants felt that it was a completely new and enriching experience for them. The principles of PFA-LOOK, LISTEN and LINK were found useful. Trainer created a supportive atmosphere and teaching methods were effective.

Recommendation for future PFA workshops

The participants recommended that more time should be available for the workshop. Participants recommended more role plays. The workshop should be done in every school and college. More professionals like lawyers and journalists should be involved. These workshops should be supported by both primary and secondary care services.

What is PFA?

- Humane, supportive and practical assistance to fellow human beings who recently suffered exposure to serious stressors, and involves:
 - Non-intrusive, practical care and support
 - Assessing needs and concerns
 - Helping people to address basic needs (food, water)
 - Listening, but not pressuring people to talk
 - Comforting people and helping them to feel calm
 - Helping people connect to information, services and social supports
 - Protecting people from further harm



What PFA is NOT?

- It is NOT something only professionals can do.
- It is NOT professional counseling.
- It is NOT "psychological debriefing."
 - No detailed discussion of the distressing event
- It is NOT asking people to analyze what happened or put time and events in order.
- Although PFA involves being available to listen to people's stories, it is NOT pressuring people to tell you their feelings or reactions to an event.