

Guide 2 Annex 4: Resources for psychosocial support

Psychosocial support, often referred to as counselling, psychological first aid or psychological help, is a helping relationship that involves a support partner working with a person to address the feelings (emotions), thoughts and beliefs, behaviours and relationships that are associated with the diagnosis and with the ongoing process of living with an NTD. The person is supported to understand and express their own thoughts and feelings about living with the condition, and to become empowered to deal with the issues that arise from their condition, leading to a better quality of life within family and community.

Whilst psychosocial support focuses on the individual, it can be beneficial to also work with the household and community when addressing the issues.

Several comprehensive guides are available for giving psychosocial support. Many are available online, and in several languages, free of charge. One of these guides is the **'Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers' developed by the World Health Organization**. This guide covers humane, supportive and practical social and psychological support to individuals who suffer or have suffered from crisis events. It provides a framework for supporting people in ways that respect their dignity, culture and abilities. Psychological first aid (PFA) has been adapted for use in the Ebola outbreak. In 2020, a COR-NTD-supported project in India will develop a PFA version for use in NTDs called 'PFA-N'.

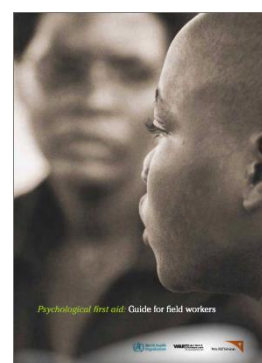


Photo credit: https://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/guide_field_workers/en/

Information about counselling for leprosy (understanding counselling and best practices) can be found in the **WHO's brief eLearning module on counselling in the leprosy context**. The eLearning module is based on the WHO Guidelines for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of leprosy, but can also be used as background information for other stigmatised health conditions.

In case assistance is needed with mental, neurological and substance use disorders, the **WHO Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP)** has useful training manuals that support non-specialised health care providers to carry out tasks previously reserved for mental health specialists, who may not be available in many settings.



Photo credit: https://www.who.int/mental_health/mhgap/en/

In case of depression, the **Healthy Activity Program (HAP)**, developed by the London School of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, can be used as a practical guide. HAP provides health professionals with information about counselling patients with moderate-to-severe depression in primary care settings.

Sometimes psychosocial support, mhGAP or HAP may not be enough. The best way to help someone may be to **refer** them to a person who is licensed and trained to help people (e.g. a counsellor or psychologist). Information about referral is in chapter 5 of Guide 2.



Support needed	Appropriate resource	URL
Social and psychological support to individuals	Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers (PFA)	PFA guide
	WHO package of training and guidance materials to promote rights and recovery for people with psychosocial, intellectual or cognitive disabilities	QualityRights tools
Assistance with mental, neurological and substance use disorders	Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP)	General information and training manual
Treatment of depression, support to Primary Health Care Centres	Healthy Activity Program (HAP)	Healthy Activity Program Manual
Urgent referral needed (e.g., risk of suicide or if the above-mentioned guides are not sufficient)	Referral to professional counselling services	See chapter 5 of Guide 2

Table 1. Resources for psychosocial support