

# Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Premise: traumatic events and losses create anxiety and emotional arousal that can interfere w/ sleep, decision-making, and effective coping.

Principle: instilling hope is a crucial component in disaster recovery.

- Calm
- Connectedness
- Practical Assistance

# Humanistically....

**Resilience** refers to an individual's capacity to thrive and fulfill potential despite or perhaps even because of stressors...

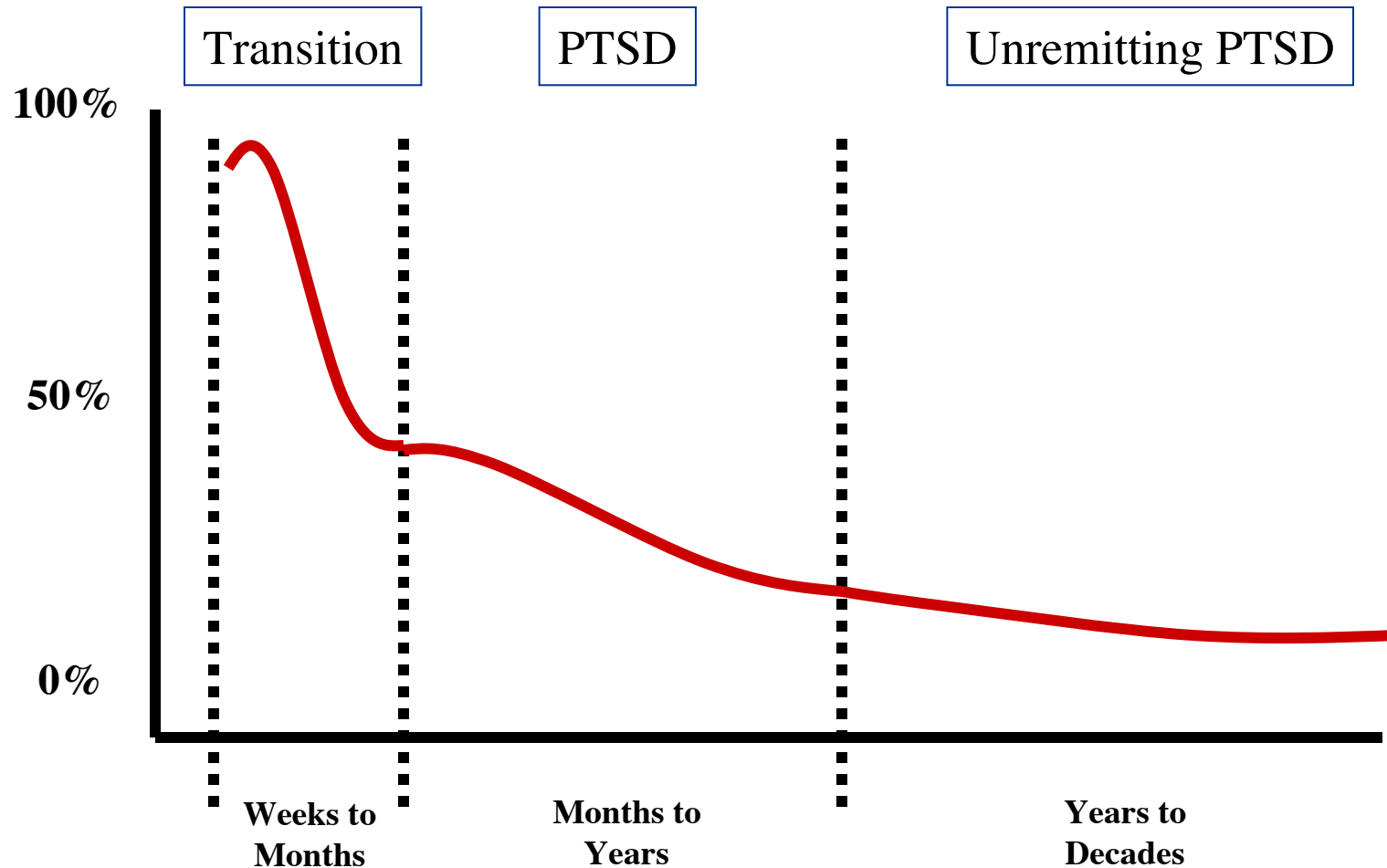
...return to a previous (pre-disaster) level of functioning



# Basic Principles of PFA

- **Promote Safety**
- **Care for basic needs**
- **Create Calm**
- **Validate feelings**
- **Opportunity to tell story**
- **Goal oriented behavior**
- **Re-establish routine**
- **Utilize existing support networks**
- **Instill Hope**

# Given Time, Most People Are Resilient



# Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Core Action #1: Contact and Engagement

Core Action #2: Safety and Comfort

Core Action #3: Stabilization

Core Action #4: Information Gathering

Core Action #5: Practical Assistance

Core Action #6: Connection and Social Supports

Core Action #7: Information and Coping

Core Action #8: Linkage with Collaborative Services

# Sub-Goals of Providing PFA

- Provide *Support*
- Reduce *Lethality*
- Provide *Linkage to Helping Resources*

## PFA IS...

- Non-intrusive
- Culturally sensitive
- Successfully community-based

## PFA IS NOT:

- Structured
- Counseling by licensed professionals
- 100% preventative

# PFA Skills

- **Address basic needs: (food, water, shelter, comfort, safety and security)**
- **Promote social engagement**
- **Reunification with those missing**
- **Attend to needs of acutely bereaved individuals**
- **Provide accurate & critical information**
  - ❖ **Expected reactions to trauma**
  - ❖ **Methods of coping**
  - ❖ **Services available**
  - ❖ **Facts about the event**
- **Use De-Escalation Skills**



# Verbal De-escalation Skills

- 1. Speak calmly and slowly**
- 2. Maintain empathy and respect**
- 3. Keep it simple.** Avoid acronyms, complicated sentences or directions.
- 4. Avoid absolutes (“always” or “never”)**
- 5. Open ended questions and statements**
- 6. Reframe if message sent is not the message received**