

Psychosocial crisis aid in emergency situations

Psychosocial crisis aid is HUMANE, SUPPORTIVE, and PRACTICAL assistance provided to people in or after a crisis. It consists of many different activities that support a person's sense of well-being and security as well as rational decision-making and behaviour.

Psychosocial crisis aid helps to prevent harmful consequences for relationships, health, and day-to-day coping. Timely and accessible psychosocial support plays an important role in the prevention and alleviation of post-traumatic stress disorder and the related disorders.

During the emergency situation, psychosocial crisis response activities support the population in psychosocial coping and adaptation and help first responders to maintain their working capacity and prevent them from burning out.

The crisis assistance provided to the population during the emergency situation includes:

- Providing adequate and up-to-date information and clear guidance
- Providing support to ensure that all basic needs are met
- Supporting people's day-to-day coping
- Supporting safe choices, giving hope
- Ensuring wide availability of psychological first aid

Supporting the people who provide help to the victims of the crisis (direct and indirect victims) is of critical importance. This includes:

- Providing adequate information and clear guidance
- Ensuring feeling safe and secure at work
- Solving issues concerning families and loved ones in cooperation with the employer
- Supporting day-to-day coping and satisfying all basic needs (sleep, food, social communication, etc.)
- Ensuring availability of psychological first aid
- Ensuring availability of specialised assistance at the workplace (supervisors' support and attention, team support measures, group supervision, defusing, etc.)

The aim of psychosocial crisis assistance provided **after the emergency situation** is to support the recovery of citizens and professionals and the return to normal life. After a psychosocial crisis some people may be traumatised by the crisis. They may need support for their mental health and social wellbeing. That kind of support may include professional psychological and psychiatric help.

Psychosocial crisis assistance is organised by the Social Insurance Board (SKA) and its activities support the public authorities which are responsible for responding to emergency situations. Psychosocial crisis assistance is provided through practical activities by many agencies, communities, volunteers and loved ones. Self-help also plays an important role.



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The Social Insurance Board carries out psychosocial crisis response activities through the following functions:

1. Informing
2. Providing direct assistance
3. Supporting agencies and specialists
4. Informing citizens and agencies
5. Screening of new needs, coordination of activities

The Social Insurance Board cooperates with the expert group of the Estonian Mental Health and Well-Being Coalition (VATEK) in identifying needs, planning, and implementing activities. VATEK is also a strategic partner of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the field of mental health.

Channels for psychosocial help

- Crisis hotline 1247, which offers psychological first aid
- Online chat with specialists of the victim support crisis hotline at www.palunabi.ee (chat window at the bottom right corner of the website)
- Advice line of the Children's Mental Health Centre of Tallinn Children's Hospital for the frontline workers of the COVID-19 crisis (health professionals, police officers) who are concerned about their children and themselves (Mon–Fri, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., phone 6787422)
- [Telephone counselling by the pastoral crisis group for hospitals and nursing homes](#)
- [Peaasi Facebook page](#) webinars, podcasts

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