In an emergency or disaster situation, injuries can occur. So having skills in basic first aid is absolutely essential for any responder. But what about the injuries that we can’t always see — such as psychological injuries? Using psychological first aid in a disaster situation can be a vital first response. Here are four basic actions you can use to perform psychological first aid.

1. Begin by meeting victims’ basic physical needs such as protection, clothing, shelter and food. This can greatly reduce psychological distress.

2. Next, try to meet the psychological needs by providing emotional support, and by allowing victims to talk about their experience should they choose to.

3. Reunite victims with friends or family as soon as possible to strengthen social and community support networks.

4. Finally, be sure that those with acute psychological needs are referred for ongoing care to the appropriate provider.

Regardless of whether you’re working in a medical needs shelter or any other setting, understanding the basics of Psychological First Aid can help you help others.

For more information, visit our Web site:
www.SouthCentralPartnership.org