

CONFIDENTIAL

THE DAY AFTER TERROR

Sustaining Singapore's Resilience

HOME TEAM BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES CENTRE,
HOME TEAM ACADEMY, MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS



**What might happen
after a terrorist attack
in Singapore?**

What Might Happen



Death, injury &
psychological
distress

Low Casualty Count?



Surabaya Church Bombings 2018

Deaths	15
Injuries	57

“By design, terrorist attacks are intended to have a **psychological impact far outweighing the physical damage** the attack causes.... A target population responding to a terrorist attack with panic and hysteria allows the perpetrators to obtain a maximum return on their physical effort. ”

(Borum, 2004; Stewart, 2012)

What Might Happen

**SAY NO
TO HATE
CRIME**

Social disharmony,
divides in society,
social mistrust

Strategies to sustain Singapore's resilience after a terrorist attack

RESILIENCE STRATEGY 1

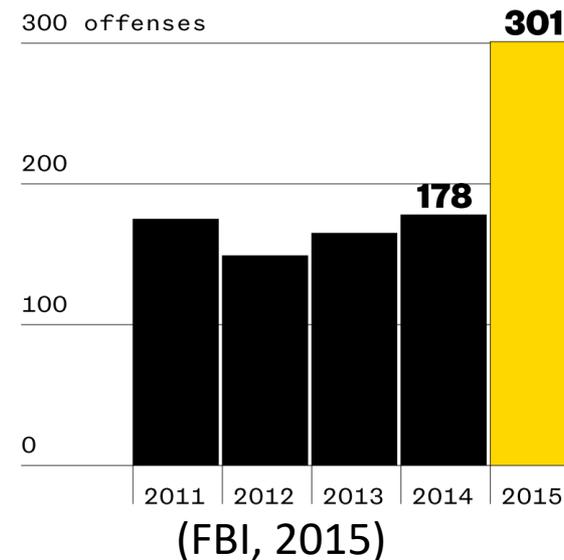
RESTORING TRUST

Post Crisis Segregation

- Attitudes of discrimination and mistrust
- High likelihood of increased hate crime post-terror attacks

2015

- In the US, there is a jump in hate crime at a rate that is not seen since 9/11
 - 178 to 301



What can we do?

- **Widen the Boundaries of Identity**
 - Increases overlaps to make groups more relatable
 - Applies to racial and religious categories
 - **Reinforce a collective identity post crisis**
 - People of Singapore
 - Remind the nation that victimised groups have as much a stake as others
- (Hoyle, 2014; Levine, Prosser, Evans and Reicher, 2005)

What can we do?

- **Help one another, especially those from other race and religion**
 - Identify vulnerable members in the community
 - Provide a listening ear to those in distress
- **Respect others' racial and religious beliefs**
 - Do not associate any acts of violent extremism with any religion, race or ethnicity
 - Do not speculate or share information that is untrue

What can we do?

- **Ground sensing efforts**
 - Identify issues and deal with them before they escalate
 - Encourage open, two way communication
 - If needed, create an anonymous platform for people to voice their concerns

What can we do?

- **Handle rumours**
 - Clamp down on rumours to prevent discrimination and distrust
 - Tackle rumours with facts
 - Don't let it fester – Deal with it promptly

RESILIENCE STRATEGY 2

**PROVIDE TIMELY
INFORMATION**

Information that people need

Providing timely information

- Be factual
 - Do not speculate or spread unverified information
- Communicate the crisis as it is: Best not to be over-assuring

Information that people need

Providing timely information

- What's to Come in the Coming Days
(“What should I do?”)
 - What members of the community must do and can expect
 - Stay at home or continue as normal?

Communicating Bad News

Informing NOKs of victims

- How do you inform NOK of people who have been affected by death/injury?
 - Be sensitive
 - Be timely
 - Face to face communication

Before sharing any news

STOP

- Doubt first. Does the information sound too good or too bad?

Check

- Find the original source
- Verify with other credible sources of information (government websites)

Act

- Communicate and work together (Silverman, 2013)

RESILIENCE STRATEGY 3

**UNDERSTANDING &
PROVIDING
PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST
AID**

Psychological Consequences of a Terror Attack

- Anxiety
- Survivor guilt
- Grief
- Withdrawal
- Somatic symptoms (e.g. difficulty breathing, tremor, sweating, anxiety, mood swings)
- Post-traumatic stress

(Fetter, 2005)

Post-9/11 Reports of PTSD



The Changing Mental Health Aftermath of 9/11--Psychological "First Aid" Gains Favor over Debriefings

Our understanding of how people experience trauma--and how best to help them recover from it--has changed greatly in the past decade

By Katherine Harmon | September 10, 2011

Just watching television footage of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, was enough to cause clinically diagnosable stress responses in some people who did not even live near the attacks—let alone the millions of people who did.

Like many other major disasters, 9/11 brought with it a host of psychological repercussions, one of the most severe of which has been post-traumatic stress disorder. PTSD is characterized by trouble



What is Psychological First Aid (PFA)?



- Addressing the **psychological and emotional stress** experienced by people in the immediate aftermath of a traumatic incident.
- Not professional counselling or therapy
- Can be done by non-professionals

Psychological First Aid



LOOK



- Observe for safety
- Observe for people with obvious urgent basic needs (e.g., injured)
- Observe for people with serious distress reactions

LISTEN



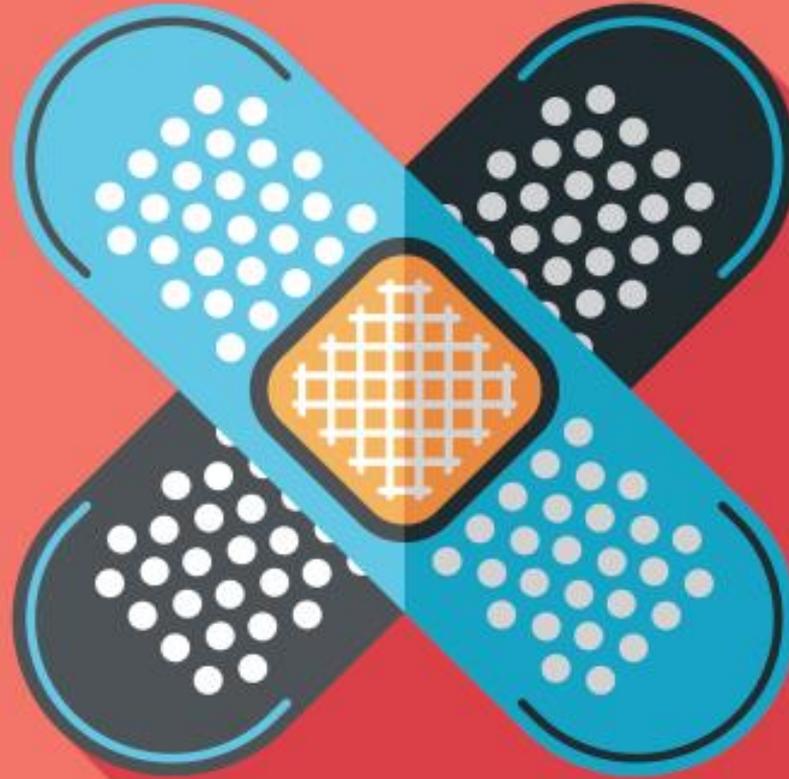
- Make contact with people who may need support
- Ask about people's needs and concerns
- Listen to people and help them feel calm

LINK



- Help people address basic needs and access services
- Help people cope with problems
- Give information
- Connect people with loved ones and social support

Importance of Self-Care





THANK YOU!

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY ENQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT

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