



COVER  **HCW**

COVID-19 PROTECTION TO ENSURE RESILIENT
HEALTH CARE WORKERS

COVER-HCW Stress First Aid

Implementation Guide for Site Champions



COVER-HCW Stress First Aid Implementation Guide for Site Champions

Welcome to the COVID-19 Protection to Ensure Resilient Health Care Workers (COVER-HCW) study! Thank you for agreeing to serve as a site champion for your organization. Your role is critical, since you will be introducing and implementing Stress First Aid to the health care workers in your organization. In this Implementation Guide, we will review your responsibilities as a site champion.

Overview

The next six sections will describe each component of your site champion role in more detail, starting with preparing for and participating in a two-hour training session with other site champions.



Get ready for Site Champion training

- Review pre-training materials
- Consider how to implement within your organization



Participate in Site Champion training

- Webinar will use Zoom platform



Plan for SFA implementation

- Schedule health care worker training within 4 weeks of Site Champion Training



Introduce SFA to selected teams

- Choose one session of 1 hour OR two sessions of 30 minutes
- Reflect on how it went



Provide SFA booster sessions

- Weekly 20–30 minute meetings
- Foster ongoing support and encouragement



Engage in COVER-HCW evaluation

- Use tracking table to record implementation activities
- Participate in evaluation interview



STEP 1

Get ready for Site Champion training

The first thing you'll do as a site champion is to learn about the Stress First Aid (SFA) model and start thinking about how you will implement it in your organization. You will need to complete this preparation before your site champion training session.

All materials you need as a site champion are located on the RAND Kiteworks site. Kiteworks is a secure file-sharing site (like Dropbox). You will need to create a Kiteworks account to access all of the materials referenced in this guide.

To prepare for the SFA training session:

1. Watch the pre-recorded SFA training video (3 hours). We have broken the video into 10 segments, each of which is 10 to 20 minutes long. You do not have to watch them all at once, so feel free to fit this into your schedule however it works best for you. For example, you could watch one segment most days during the two weeks leading up to the training session. All of the videos are available on our study YouTube channel (see [Appendix A: SFA Training Videos](#)).

2. Prepare an initial implementation plan for your site (see [Appendix B: Implementation Planning Worksheet](#)). Think about the following questions:
- a. The needs of the teams/units you will be training
 - What has been their experience over the past year? How heavy has their workload been? How stressed are they?
 - What potentially traumatic events have they experienced? What losses? What sources of moral distress?
 - Which teams and roles within teams are at the greatest risk for overwhelming stress?
 - What, if any, support have they received from the organization? What has worked well to improve their wellbeing, and what has not?
 - b. The organizational context
 - How is COVID affecting your organization currently? What resources are being impacted? What does current staffing look like?
 - How are meetings (e.g., education/professional development, team huddles) currently conducted?
 - Do your teams currently conduct regular meetings at which a focus on professional well-being, such as Stress First Aid training, might be appropriate and feasible?
 - Does your organization's culture encourage team members to look out for each other's welfare, and charge leaders with protecting their subordinates' health and well-being?
 - How does an intervention designed to monitor and manage stress in individuals and teams, across its continuum and over the long haul, align with other efforts that might be underway at your organization to support healthcare worker wellbeing?





STEP 2

Participate in Site Champion training

The Site Champion Virtual Training is a two-hour webinar that will be led by Patricia Watson, PhD, one of the original founders of Stress First Aid and an expert in the model.

For the training, you will need to be able to access the internet and have a computer with a camera so you can participate virtually. The training will take place using the Zoom platform. If possible, please test your computer functionality with Zoom before the training to ensure a smooth and timely connection.

Site Champion Training Agenda

Time	Topic
15 min	Welcome and Introductions Project Overview and Timeline
20 min	Review of SFA Model
20 min	What makes an effective Champion?
10 min	Implementing SFA at your site
15 min	SFA introduction role play
25 min	Facilitating SFA training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review options for deploying SFA at sites; discuss pros/cons • Booster sessions and keeping the discussion going • What barriers do you foresee in implementing SFA, and how might these be overcome?
15 min	Group discussion



Patricia A. Watson, PhD

Continuing Education

Site champions attending the 2-hour training may be eligible to receive continuing education (CE) credits from an approved professional organization.

- We have arranged for champions with certain professional backgrounds to receive 2 CE credits for the 2-hour training.
- We have also arranged for health care workers that you will train at your hospital or practice to receive 1 CE credit for a 1-hour training.

Credit may only be obtained for completing the “live” trainings and passing the post-test. So, even though we will audio record the training to allow for viewing it at a later time, CE credit cannot be provided for viewing the recording only.

Anyone who is a physician, nurse, pharmacist, psychologist, social worker, or community health worker will be eligible for CE credit. Information on how to obtain credit will be provided separately.

- Dr. Patricia Watson has been a clinical psychologist at the National Center for PTSD since 1998
- Prior to that she was an active duty Navy psychologist for 8 years
- She received her doctoral degree from Catholic University and postgraduate fellowship in pediatric psychology at Harvard Medical School
- She has co-authored versions of Stress First Aid (SFA) for Navy/Marine Corps, firefighters and emergency services personnel, law enforcement professionals, wildland firefighters, health care providers, probation officers, and rail workers
- Other areas of work include disaster mental health interventions such as Psychological First Aid and Skills for Psychological Recovery, early intervention for traumatic stress, resilience, moral injury, military culture, and trauma in children and adolescents





STEP 3:

Plan for SFA implementation

Prior to the Site Champion training, you should have completed the Implementation Planning Template (see [Appendix B](#)). During and after the training, you will have time to revise this Template as needed, to suit specific circumstances at your site. This template can act as a guide as you make plans to launch your SFA training, which should take place within one month (4 weeks) of the Site Champion training.

In finalizing your plans, you will also need to confirm with your site leadership which health care workers will receive SFA training. If you are a site champion at a hospital, one or more units or departments (e.g., all staff in the Emergency Department or an Intensive Care Unit) will have been selected to receive this training. If you are a site champion at a health center, all or a majority of the patient-facing staff will receive the training. Meet with the leaders of the units/departments who will be trained to explain your role, what SFA is, and enlist their help and support in facilitating the training.

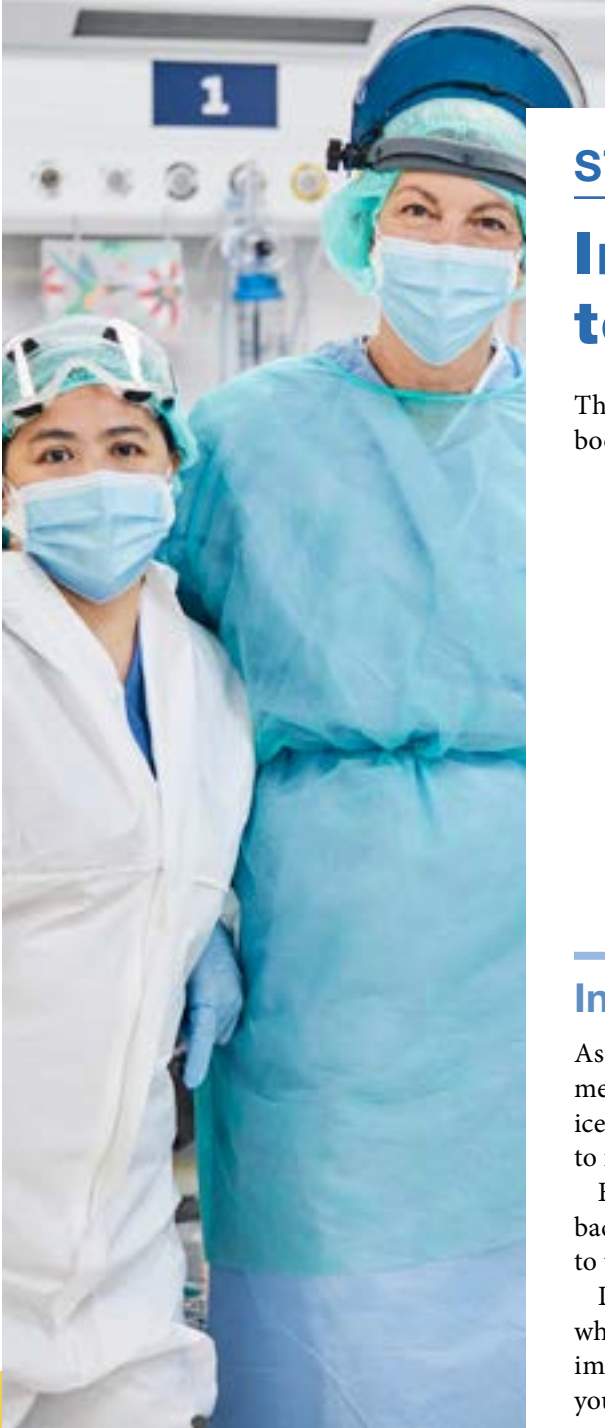
You will also need to determine how and when training will happen and schedule the training date (or dates) for the team. See Step 4 for some logistical considerations, in terms of timing and frequency of the training.

Once the training is scheduled, you should prepare to deliver the training and ensure that you have all the materials you will need:

- **Stress First Aid training slides** (PowerPoint): Consider the presentation logistics, for example you may need a computer and projector, or you may need to be in a conference room where the slides can be displayed on a large screen.
- **Stress First Aid training talking points:** Review the talking points for each slide and practice your presentation so you feel comfortable with the pace of the presentation and can cover all of the material in 60 minutes.
- **Materials for health care workers attending the training:**
 - a. Stress First Aid workbook.
 - b. Handouts on specific topics (you may select some/all to distribute, depending on the needs of your organization)
- **Stress First Aid “campaign” materials:** Each health care worker who completes the training (and you, too!) will receive (1) a pocket card as a reminder of the stress continuum and the Stress First Aid core actions, and (2) a button to wear on a lapel, lab coat, badge, or elsewhere to demonstrate being part of the team.

This is also a good time to plan and schedule booster sessions (discussed more in Step 5) and think about how to provide ongoing support. You will conduct eight weekly 20-30 minute semi-structured booster sessions with health care workers who have received SFA training. The booster sessions will reinforce the principles of Stress First Aid and allow time to practice using the model in real situations. You could do this at regular meetings, taking the first part of the meeting to check in about SFA, for example, or schedule separate short meetings for this purpose. You could also do this by phone, if it's easier to get everyone on a conference call. Think about what will work in your setting and context.





STEP 4:

Introduce SFA to selected teams

The SFA training will consist of 1 hour of live training (plus 8 weekly booster sessions) that you deliver to HCW teams in your organization.

- The training may be delivered **in person OR by videoconference**.
- You have a **choice of training staff in a one 60-minute session, or in two 30-minute sessions**, depending on the local circumstances at your site.
- To the extent possible, teams or units should attend the training together to maximize the peer support aspect of the SFA intervention. However, **you may need to conduct multiple trainings to accommodate schedules**.
- You may choose to video record one of the trainings so that your team members can view it on their own time to learn about Stress First Aid. However, team members who view only the recorded training will not be eligible for receiving CE credit.

Introduce yourself and your role

As the site champion, you will need to earn buy-in and build engagement. At the outset of the training, **make introductions**. Consider an icebreaker to help staff shift from patient care duties and work stressors to focusing on the training and each other.

Explain your background, credentials, and role. Provide primary and backup contact information so staff see you as an accessible resource tied to the intervention.

Discuss **why you chose to be a site champion** for this intervention and why you support the SFA model. This can include sharing your initial impressions of SFA, your experiences using the model in practice, and your thoughts on why SFA will be helpful to staff. For example:

- SFA is a good fit for health care workers because it is a self-care approach that can be used any time to help reduce distress.
- SFA is also a good fit for health care workers because it uses a peer-to-peer approach that enables everyone on a team to look out for each other.
- SFA takes little time to learn and with regular practice can be a low burden approach to maintaining wellness.
- SFA is based on cutting-edge stress science.
- SFA is designed to be used by members of teams working together to accomplish important missions, like firefighters and Marines.

- In addition to providing a set of tools to monitor and manage stress in individual healthcare workers, SFA serves as a strategic framework for assessing and managing stress in a team, unit, or organization.
- SFA may make you a better family member, friend, and member of your community

Deliver the SFA training

Provide the team with the **60-minute training** and supporting material. Refer to the SFA training manual and other materials you will receive during your site champion training.

Distribute (or send via email) all SFA resources (the SFA workbook, pocket card, and button) to each attendee.

Before the training ends, discuss when and where **booster sessions** will happen, and remind health care workers to bring their SFA workbook to each booster session.

Discuss your **availability for questions**, consultation (e.g., how quickly you will be able to return calls or emails; better times of day to talk).

Reflect and share

Following the training, reflect on how the session went and informally document any key impressions

- How receptive/engaged were staff?
- What staff needs did you identify during the training? What barriers to using the SFA model might staff face?
- Was there anything you might have done differently? Content that you would have added or spent more time on? Other materials you would have liked to use?

There will be various opportunities to connect with other site champions, and share impressions, lessons learned, and challenges/questions—more information on this will be forthcoming. In addition, please consider sending a message to the project team (COVER-HCW@rand.org) with questions, concerns, or impression you think are important to raise and share widely.





STEP 5:

Provide weekly SFA booster sessions

An important aspect of SFA implementation is conducting **eight weekly booster sessions** and providing ongoing support for HCW teams following the SFA core training(s).

Booster Sessions

Booster session will be critical to providing ongoing support to trained staff, helping them to operationalize the principles of SFA, and identifying other staff needs related to wellbeing as they arise. This is particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when circumstances and pressures on staff are intense and constantly changing.

The purpose of the booster sessions is to reinforce the SFA principles by discussing current stressors or recent stress-inducing events, and how to apply SFA to reduce stress and improve wellbeing in these circumstances. These sessions will help HCWs get in the habit of applying SFA principles throughout their daily work.

You will conduct eight weekly booster sessions. Each booster session should be 20 to 30 minutes long and can happen as part of a regular meeting (for example, the first half of an hour-long meeting, or during a team huddle) or scheduled as a separate meeting. You can use the SFA workbook (included in your implementation materials) to inform the content of your booster sessions, and as a way of structuring group discussion about SFA (see schedule).

Booster Session Schedule

1. Session 1: Orientation to Booster Sessions
 - a. SFA Review
 - b. Stress Continuum and Orange/Red Zone behaviors/habits
 - c. Obstacles to self-care and coworker support
2. Session 2: Check
 - a. Get to know personal orange or red zone indicators
 - b. Different ways to check in on coworkers
3. Session 3: Coordinate
 - a. Discuss resources and options for referral
 - b. Brainstorm ways to increase knowledge of and access to resources
4. Session 4: Practice SFA Actions (Choose a or b):
 - a. Practice application of SFA actions to a workbook scenario
 - b. Discuss how to apply the SFA model to current work situations
5. Session 5: Practice SFA Actions (Choose a or b):
 - a. Practice application of SFA actions to a workbook scenario
 - b. Discuss how to apply the SFA model to current work situations
6. Session 6: Practice SFA Actions (Choose a or b):
 - a. Practice application of SFA actions to a workbook scenario
 - b. Discuss how to apply the SFA model to current work situations
7. Session 7: Practice SFA Actions (Choose a or b):
 - a. Practice application of SFA actions to a workbook scenario
 - b. Discuss how to apply the SFA model to current work situations
8. Session 8: Wrap Up / Review of Booster Sessions and Next Steps

These meetings can be held virtually or in-person as decided by the team/department, and the frequency and format for booster sessions should ideally be communicated to staff before the initial training ends. We encourage site champions to approach these sessions with a flexible mindset and to implement these sessions in ways that are most helpful to staff. Consider also asking the group their preferences for brief positive exercises that you can incorporate into these boosters (i.e., reflection, stretching, breathing or guided visualization) as a way to relax attendees.



Ongoing Support and Encouragement

As we will discuss during the training, the Site Champion role is critical to the success of SFA implementation. Perhaps the most important role you will play is as a coach and source of support for staff trying to apply SFA principles to their daily life. There are various things you can do to operationalize this role successfully:

- **Be available to staff.** Of course, this doesn't mean that you should offer 24/7 availability but rather, a willingness to meet with staff—either in groups and through booster sessions, or individually if needed—to help them think through how SFA can apply to the stressors they are facing.
- **Encourage staff to use the model** when they encounter stressful events. With the pace of care delivery today, it will be easy to forget to use SFA principles during or after stressful events. Staff may need to be reminded, and given space (or encouraged to take space) to use SFA for themselves and to support each other.
- **Listen empathically and help the team problem solve.** You do not have to—and likely cannot—solve their problems, but you can help them brainstorm solutions and consider alternatives.
- **Reinforce that they are not alone.** Tell staff that providing SFA support to each other is very important to you, and that you're going to check in regularly and offer support.
- **Consider additional opportunities to provide ongoing support**
 - a. Share SFA resources via email
 - b. Regularly add tips or actions that support green zone functioning to staff meetings.
 - c. Post or send an email of resources available to staff within your workplace (e.g., occupational health, support groups, webinars).
 - d. Offer information on hotlines and virtual resources, such as:
 - [SAMHSA Hotline](#)
 - [National Suicide Lifeline](#)
- **Determine how to best address shocking, highly distressing, or critical incidents that happen at work.** What policy would help address an incident that occurs during your shift? These might include a unit-based group check-in or discussion to allow staff to share emotions, connect with each other, determine needs, and instill hope.

What policy would help address an incident that occurs during your shift?



STEP 6:

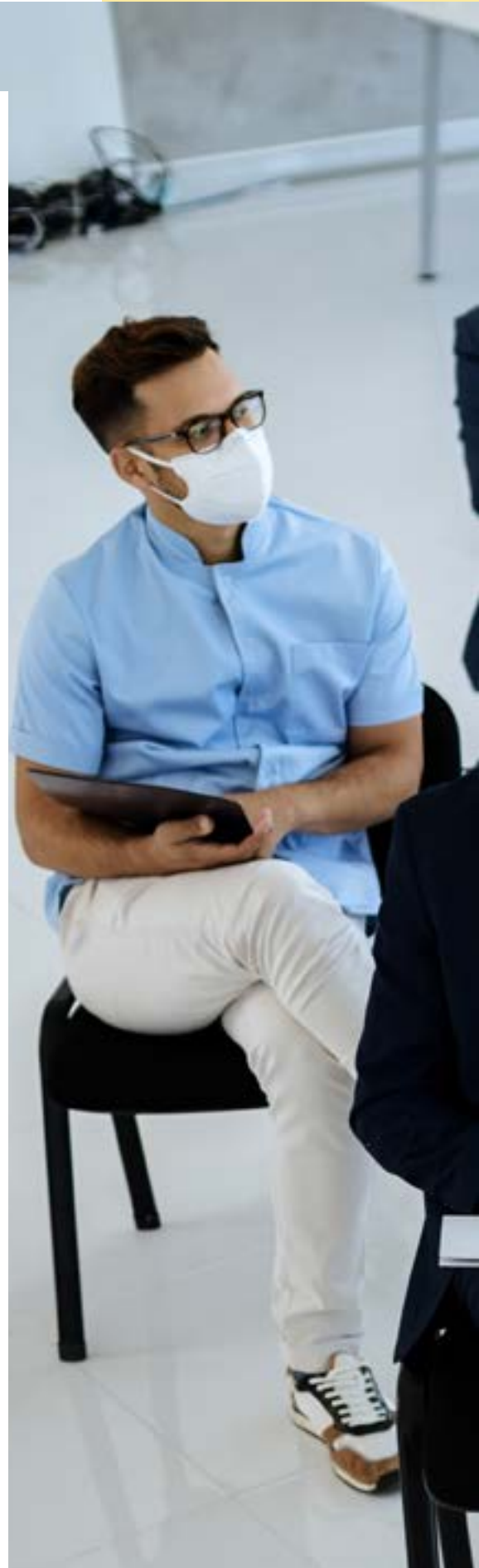
Engage in COVER-HCW evaluation

As a site champion, you will play an integral role in helping us evaluate the effectiveness and acceptability of the SFA intervention as it is implemented at your site. The evaluation component of this study is the key to understanding whether the SFA model is helpful to health care workers, and whether it helps them mitigate the stress and trauma they are currently facing. It also will tell us if the model is easily deployed at health care sites, and how we might facilitate timely implementation in the future.

As part of our evaluation activities, all healthcare workers who participate in a SFA training at your site will be asked to complete a brief online survey before and after the training. In addition, as a site champion, we will collect your feedback on the implementation process and the intervention itself, through a semi-structured, one-hour interview, after the local site training.

During the implementation period at your site (i.e., from the site champion training through the post-survey of health care workers who were trained at your site), we also ask you to document key implementation details. These might include who attends the trainings, who participates in booster activities, how trainees engaged with the content during and after the training, and any feedback trainees communicate to you about the SFA intervention and its implementation. In addition, we are interested in learning how much time you, as site champion, invested in SFA implementation (e.g., preparing for the training, supporting healthcare workers, answering questions from leadership), and any challenges you faced during implementation, as well as how you overcame those.

[Appendix C](#) includes a tracking table that might be helpful to you for documenting these key data points.



Appendix A: SFA Training Videos

Complete playlist (copy and paste the link into your browser):

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLONpd5B_A4vsaoLT6qdr9SgP4AIF3Dfi4

Video #	Title	Link	Length
1	Introduction to COVER-HCW study	https://youtu.be/Zqjo2Q-L_eM	4:13
2	Introduction to SFA in Health Care Settings	https://youtu.be/KyIWqe6p550	27:55
3	SFA Model	https://youtu.be/xNJxcl2CH9U	23:34
4	SFA Core Action #1: Check	https://youtu.be/FcPQBuv9XDs	19:22
5	SFA Core Action #2: Coordinate	https://youtu.be/DPgiY1SzWIE	7:31
6	SFA Core Action #3: Cover	https://youtu.be/-Tci7xGxLBA	8:42
7	SFA Core Action #4: Calm	https://youtu.be/NtiCDnsrGUk	11:18
8	SFA Core Action #5: Connect	https://youtu.be/cHtF0qKZNNk	10:05
9	SFA Core Action #6: Competence	https://youtu.be/ezrAFGdAE18	13:08
10	SFA Core Action #7: Confidence	https://youtu.be/h6-inb74- E	20:26
11	Delivering SFA in Group Format	https://youtu.be/dKhyUXpMZso	23:08

Appendix B: Implementation Planning Worksheet

Cohort:

Site Name:

Site Lead Name:

Site Champion Name:

Organizational Support	
<p>Which teams or departments at your site will receive Stress First Aid training?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outpatient clinics or FQHCs should train 50 healthcare workers/patient-facing staff members. • Hospitals should aim to train 170 healthcare workers/patient-facing staff members. 	
<p>Who are the key stakeholders who should be made aware of the SFA intervention at your site?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider those who can help to “advertise” SFA at your site, and support staff participation in the study (e.g., unit leaders, nurse managers). 	
Organizational Alignment	
<p>In what ways does the SFA model align with your organization’s mission and values? How do you think it will fit into organizational priorities?</p>	
<p>How could you adapt SFA language to better align with your organization’s mission and values?</p>	
<p>What existing programs does your organization sponsor to support health care worker wellbeing (before or during COVID)?</p>	
<p>How will SFA complement existing peer support and staff wellbeing programs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider what efficiencies you could leverage from existing efforts when you implement SFA training at your site 	

SFA Training Logistics	
<p>When and where will you conduct the SFA training for health care workers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will you implement the single 60-minute version of the training, or the two 30-minute sessions? What factors will affect your decision about which version to implement? • When do regular staff meetings happen? Who is responsible for scheduling those? What would you need to do to make SFA training the main agenda item? • Will you need to conduct the training more than once to be sure everyone attends? 	
<p>What activities might you be able to include in the SFA training to supplement learning? For example, workbook exercises, role-play practice?</p>	
<p>How will you conduct the weekly 20-30 minute booster sessions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will they be in-person or virtual? • Can they be integrated into existing activities, such as team huddles? • What do you think will be important to talk about during these booster sessions? • What activities or practice opportunities might make sense to incorporate in the booster sessions? 	
<p>What local resources would you recommend for health care workers who need additional support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information on employee assistance programs, crisis lines, counseling services, etc. 	
<p>What resources do you need to move forward?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistical support such as help with scheduling or contacting staff, room reservations, technology • Help with “boosting” the SFA training, encouraging staff to participate • Protected time or leadership support • Additional experience/training with SFA • Ideas on how to support staff with using the SFA model. <p>Who could you approach to get the help you need?</p>	
<p>What obstacles do you anticipate?</p>	

Appendix C.

Stress First Aid

Implementation Tracker

for Site Champions

Instructions

We have developed two tools for you to capture key details about SFA implementation at your site. The first table focuses on the training and booster sessions you will lead with staff; and the second is for you to record the time you invest as a site champion and your observations and experiences with SFA implementation, by week.

SFA Training Engagement

Date	Training or booster?	Length (minutes)	Number invited	Number attended	Notes on engagement during the session or feedback received from attendees
XX/XX/2021	Training				

Experiences with SFA Implementation

Week	Approximate hours spent	General notes on implementation This section may include details about your work during the week (e.g., how you prepared for a training, or supported staff), the degree of buy-in or engagement among staff and leadership, any feedback on the SFA model you received, and general comments on implementation in your site including successes and challenges.
Week 1		
Week 2		
Week 3		
Week 4		
Week 5		
Week 6		
Week 7		
Week 8		
Week 9		

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