Mental Health First Aid Quiz

PLEASE CIRCLE THE BEST ANSWER

1: Your best friend was a victim of physical assault some years ago and has since been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. You’re with her when she breaks into a sweat, doubles over as if in pain and starts to hyperventilate.

Do you:

a) Move with your friend to a quiet place, reassure her, and help her to slow her breathing.

b) Give her some time alone because giving her attention during these episodes will only encourage similar future behavior.

c) Take her somewhere quiet and help her calm down over a cup of coffee or tea. Gently point out that her attacker is long gone and her fears are unfounded.

2: You notice that a family friend who is a college sophomore has been functioning less well as the school year progresses. At the beginning of the semester, she was vibrant and seemed to enjoy her classes. Now, she has clearly lost weight, seems depressed, has a hard time paying attention, expresses odd ideas sometimes when you talk with her, and seems to have lost her motivation.

Do you:

a) Tell her she needs substance abuse treatment and you are sorry she succumbed to the drinking and drugs that are all too common at most colleges.

b) Suggest that she get academic counseling or tutoring to help her get back on track.

c) Express your concern and offer to help her get an appointment at the college counseling center or other services.

3: Your close friend has used marijuana regularly since high school and drinks occasionally. Lately she has seemed preoccupied with both substances, as well as confused and anxious. In fact she seems to have undergone a significant personality change.

Do you:

a) Tell her you’re concerned about her and the changes in her behavior you’ve noticed. Ask her to talk with you about these changes.

b) Tell her to quit drinking because alcohol dulls your thinking while marijuana is a natural substance that doesn’t interfere with brain function.

c) Tell her that she has a drug problem and you cannot see her again until she has gotten it under control.
4: You’re outside the pre-school waiting to collect your child when you notice another adult behaving strangely. He’s walking in circles and having a heated argument with someone who isn’t there.

Do you:
  a) Ignore him. He’s not your problem as long as he doesn’t come anywhere near your child.
  b) Assess the situation for risk of harm to yourself or others. If needed, encourage others not to be confrontational with him. If you feel safe and able to approach him non-confrontationally, ask if he’s OK and what help he might need. Consider notifying school personnel.
  c) Approach him directly, standing squarely in front of him and making clear eye contact. Put your hand on his shoulder and be assertive, telling him that he needs to leave the area.

5. You are concerned about a co-worker who has been difficult lately. His work is suffering, and he has been missing deadlines. On a few occasions over the past month he has called in sick when he seemed okay the afternoon before. Last night at a happy hour, where he is usually the life of the party, he was quiet, and consumed drink after drink by himself. This morning, he calls in sick and tells you that he can’t take the pressure and is considering resigning.

Do you:
  a) Tell him you have noticed that his frequent absences and missed deadlines have been hard on his co-workers, and maybe this job is just not a good fit.
  b) Tell him that you are concerned about him, and ask him if he can talk more about the pressure he is feeling. Try to make plans to meet him that day for lunch to continue the conversation in person.
  c) Tell him that based on what you have seen at Happy Hours, he has a problem and should quit drinking.

6: You’re at home watching a favorite movie when your Ex calls, sounding really upset and talking about wanting to kill him/herself.

Do you:
  a) End the call quickly, this is not your problem. People who threaten suicide rarely go through with it. Your Ex can take care of him/herself, and you are no longer together.
  b) Ask your Ex if s/he has a plan or has made any prior suicide attempts and consider if s/he has the resources to attempt suicide now. Discuss ways s/he can stay safe, such as calling a suicide hotline, a mental health crisis team, or 911.
  c) Ask how s/he intends to kill him/herself. If your Ex doesn’t have a plan s/he’s probably not serious and so you can go back to your movie without worry.
7: A colleague seems to have lost all pride in his appearance and enthusiasm for life. His speech is sluggish, he’s sad all the time and he’s recently given away several favorite office possessions.

Do you:
   a) Ask if there’s anything he’d like to talk about and try to find out if he seems depressed or has had any thoughts about ending his life.
   b) Keep the conversation light – avoiding any discussion of suicide or death – he is upset enough already and you wouldn’t want to put the idea in his head.
   c) Take him out for a good drink and send him home in a cab. Alcohol is a stimulant and can help someone snap out of a funk.

8: You’re at a party when one of the guests becomes violent. She has a knife and it’s obvious that she’s responding to voices only she can hear.

Do you:
   a) Try to gain her trust by pretending you can hear the voices too. Agree with everything she says until you can get close enough to take the knife away from her.
   b) Take her down physically by whatever means possible and have someone call the police.
   c) Call 911. While you’re waiting for the police and mental health crisis team to arrive, turn off the music and encourage people not to confront her or get too close; make sure your exit is not blocked. Perhaps speak calmly to her, but don’t argue with her.

9: You get along well with your neighbor but her mood swings and love of partying are wearing thin. She can go without sleep for days and expects everyone else to do the same, coming up with poorly thought out projects and becoming annoyed at anyone less than enthusiastic about them. On other days she rarely leaves her house or says hello.

Do you:
   a) Try to catch her in one of her quieter moments and share with her that you’re concerned about her moods, encouraging her to see her physician and offer to go along if she wishes.
   b) Distance yourself from her. She might be a lot of fun at times, but you shouldn’t invest time and energy in the relationship as her split personality is draining for both of you.
   c) Be direct with her about her unrealistic projects and lifestyle. You can only help her by forcing her to confront her obvious mental illness.
10: When you see your niece at Thanksgiving she appears to have lost a great deal of weight. She says she is working on a project for school and takes her plate of turkey and trimmings to her room. You go up to see her later and notice she has not touched her dinner.

a) Compliment her on her self-control during such a high-calorie opportunity and tell her she looks great – encourage her to keep it up!

b) Engage her in conversation maybe asking how school is going. Mention that you notice her weight loss, are concerned, and tell her you’re there for her if there’s ever anything she wants to talk about.

c) You know she is a 4.0 student, so it’s ok to leave her alone to concentrate on her schoolwork.

Passing score: at least 6 correct out of 10