ADDENDUM J

Mental Health: Zero to Full Competency

Curious how Tier, Stage, and Phase relate? See the Glossary.

Why This Addendum Exists

Chapter 11 tells you what to have and do at each tier of a disruption. It does not build the actual crisis-response and peer-support competency that makes a household or community capable of helping someone in real psychological distress, rather than just meaning well. This addendum is a skill-building curriculum for exactly that, built from real, standardized certifications, not just awareness reading.

It's organized by skill stage, not by disaster duration, following the same structure as the other addenda. As with Chapter 11 itself: this addendum is general skill-building guidance, not a substitute for professional mental health care, and none of it changes the advice to call or text 988 for an active crisis regardless of what stage you're at.

Four stages: Foundations (basic safe practice), Applied Practice (hands-on competence), Self-Sufficiency (independent, resilient skill), and Mastery & Teaching (able to teach others and operate at community scale). Each stage covers two sub-skill tracks that run in parallel: individual crisis response, and peer support and community mental health.

Stage 1: Foundations (Awareness)

Goal: know the core crisis-response facts well enough to not make a bad situation worse, and understand the real resources available. This stage is readable in a weekend.

Individual Crisis Response: Core Knowledge

The core concept at this stage is the PFA framework already covered in Chapter 11 (Listen, Protect, Connect, Model, Teach), and knowing the actual difference between 988, 211, and 911 well enough to route correctly under stress. Understand that acute stress reactions (hypervigilance, insomnia, irritability) are normal short-term responses to an abnormal event, not evidence something has gone

permanently wrong; that framing itself is protective. See the Psychological First Aid skill guide for a complementary framework, the WHO/Red Cross's Look, Listen, Link, covering much of the same ground as FEMA's model above under different terminology.

Peer Support: Core Knowledge

The core concept at this stage is understanding what peer support actually is and isn't: it's support from someone with lived experience, structured and bounded, not informal advice-giving or trying to fix someone. Understand SAMHSA's six-phase disaster behavioral health model (already covered in Chapter 11) well enough to recognize which phase a community is actually in, since the right kind of support is different in the Heroic phase than in Disillusionment.

Stage 1 Learning Path

Resource	Cost / Format	Notes
Listen, Protect, Connect: Family to Family, Neighbor to Neighbor (FEMA/Dr. Merritt Schreiber)	Free, online	The original PFA handbook already cited in Chapter 11; read the source document, not just the summary.
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (Utah)	Free	988.utah.gov. Already cited in Chapter 11; understand exactly what happens when you call or text.
SAMHSA disaster behavioral health model overview	Free, online	samhsa.gov. The six-phase model's official source.

Stage 1 Practice Exercises

- **Practice the PFA framework in a low-stakes conversation:** Deliberately use Listen, Protect, Connect, Model, Teach in an ordinary difficult conversation (not a crisis) to build the muscle memory before you need it under real stress.
- **Memorize the 988/211/911 routing logic:** Practice explaining out loud, without notes, which number to call for a mental health crisis, a non-emergency resource need, and immediate danger to life.
- **Identify which SAMHSA phase your own community experienced most recently:** Reflect on a real local event (even a smaller one) and identify which of the six phases it moved through, to make the model concrete rather than abstract.

Self-Check: Ready for Stage 2?

You should be able to recite the PFA framework and the 988/211/911 routing logic without looking it up, and explain the SAMHSA six-phase model well enough to identify which phase a real situation is in.

Stage 2: Applied Practice (Competent)

Goal: hold a real, standardized certification and have practiced the actual skills under instruction, not just read about them. Both certifications in this stage are short, low-cost, and widely available in Utah.

Individual Crisis Response: Applied Practice

- **Get QPR certified:** QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) is a 60–90 minute training teaching suicide warning-sign recognition and how to guide someone to help, modeled deliberately on how CPR training works for physical emergencies. NAMI Utah runs free QPR workshops on the second Wednesday of most months.
- **Practice the actual QPR conversation, not just the acronym:** The hardest part of QPR is asking the direct question (“are you thinking about suicide?”) without flinching; practice saying it out loud in a training or role-play context before you need it for real.
- **Know your specific local crisis resources beyond 988:** Identify your county’s specific mobile crisis outreach team or crisis receiving center, if one exists, since some situations benefit from an in-person response beyond a phone line.

Peer Support: Applied Practice

- **Get Mental Health First Aid certified:** The standard 6–8 hour certification (already cited in Chapter 11) teaches recognition and response to mental health and substance use crises; in Utah, classes are taught through NUHOPE, Weber-Morgan Health Department, Weber Human Services, Davis Behavioral Health, and other community partners, and can be found through utahsuicideprevention.org.
- **Practice active listening deliberately:** Active listening (reflecting back, not interrupting, not immediately problem-solving) is a specific, practicable skill; practice it deliberately in low-stakes conversations, not just during a crisis.

- **Build your household's crisis resource card:** Cross-reference Appendix B's contact list; make sure 988, 211, your county's crisis resources, and SAMHSA's National Helpline are all somewhere your whole household can find without a phone.

Stage 2 Learning Path

Resource	Cost / Format	Notes
NAMI Utah QPR training	Free	namiut.org/support-and-education/qpr-suicide-prevention-education. Free monthly online workshops.
Mental Health First Aid (Utah providers)	Course fees vary by provider; some free/subsidized	utahsuicideprevention.org lists current Utah trainers and providers, including NUHOPE and county behavioral health agencies.
SAMHSA National Helpline	Free	1-800-662-4357. Already cited in Chapter 11; confirm your household actually knows this exists alongside 988.

Self-Check: Ready for Stage 3?

You should hold current QPR and Mental Health First Aid certifications, and have practiced the actual direct-question conversation QPR requires, not just learned the acronym. Certification without practicing the specific hard conversation is still Stage 1 competency in practice.

Stage 3: Self-Sufficiency (Proficient)

Goal: genuine independent capability to support someone through a real, sustained mental health crisis, the actual skill level Chapter 11's Tier 2 and Tier 3 assume a household or community has.

Individual Crisis Response: Self-Sufficiency

- **Deepen means-restriction competency:** Chapter 11's Tier 3 already covers removing access to lethal means during acute suicide risk; Stage 3 is building genuine comfort and practiced skill at having that specific conversation and taking that specific action, since hesitation in the moment undermines its effectiveness.
- **Understand co-occurring substance use response:** Build real understanding of the Tier 2 substance-use-awareness guidance already in Chapter 11: recognizing escalating use as a

coping mechanism, and how to address it directly without shame. The Substance Withdrawal: What's Actually Dangerous skill guide covers a related but distinct risk worth knowing alongside this: recognizing when withdrawal itself, not just escalating use, becomes a medical emergency.

- **Practice sustained support, not just single-crisis response:** A one-time PFA or QPR conversation is different from supporting someone through the weeks of a real disillusionment-phase crisis; build the endurance and boundary-setting skill that sustained support actually requires.

Peer Support: Self-Sufficiency

- **Volunteer as a support-group participant or co-facilitator:** Real facilitation skill (running a group check-in, managing a difficult group dynamic) is built through actual practice in a real group setting, not from reading about it.
- **Understand trauma-informed communication:** Build real working knowledge of trauma-informed principles (safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment) that shape how peer support is actually delivered well versus poorly.
- **Cross-train with Addendum C (Medical Care):** CERT training's disaster medical operations component and Mental Health First Aid overlap meaningfully in a real mass-casualty or disaster context; cross-training strengthens both.

Stage 3 Learning Path

Resource	Cost / Format	Notes
Utah Suicide Prevention training network	Course fees vary	utahsuicideprevention.org. Central Utah hub for QPR, Mental Health First Aid, Creating Safety, and related advanced trainings.
NUHOPE course offerings	Course fees vary	nuhopeutah.org/courses-offered. A Utah community mental health training provider offering a range of courses beyond the basics.
Local support group facilitation opportunities	Often free to volunteer	Contact NAMI Utah or your county behavioral health agency directly for co-facilitation opportunities.

Self-Check: Ready for Stage 4?

You should be comfortable having a direct means-restriction conversation without hesitation, have real experience supporting someone through a sustained (not single-incident) crisis, and have practiced group facilitation in a real setting, not just individual conversation.

Stage 4: Mastery & Teaching (Expert)

Goal: professional-level or professional-adjacent credentials, the ability to teach others, and real community-scale mental health infrastructure capability. This is the stage Chapter 11's Tier 4 (distributed community mental health network) actually depends on.

Teaching & Certification

- **Pursue Utah Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) certification:** A genuine, state-run professional-adjacent credential specifically for people with lived experience: requires at least one year of successful recovery from mental illness or substance use challenges, 40 hours of training over five days, and a certification exam (70%+ to pass), renewed every two years with 20 hours of continuing education. Administered through Utah's Office of Substance Use and Mental Health (SUMH); this is the credential Chapter 11's Tier 4 "distributed peer support" goal is actually built around.
- **Become a Mental Health First Aid Instructor:** Requires having completed the standard course within the past 3 years, then completing instructor certification training (commonly a multi-day program through the National Council for Mental Wellbeing); certified instructors must teach the course at least three times a year to maintain certification, which is itself the mechanism for spreading this skill through a community.
- **Understand (don't necessarily pursue) professional licensure:** Full clinical licensure (LCSW, CMHC, psychologist) is a multi-year graduate-level path well beyond this addendum's scope; know that it exists as the real ceiling, and that Stage 4 competency here is peer-level, not a substitute for professional treatment.

Community-Scale Practice

- **Build the distributed peer support network described in Chapter 11's Tier 4:** Chapter 11 calls for multiple trained peer supporters so crisis capability doesn't depend on one person; Stage 4

is where you help recruit and train others toward CPSS or Mental Health First Aid, not just hold the credential yourself.

- **Extend wellness checks to cover psychological isolation:** Cross-reference Addendum H's (Access & Functional Needs) community wellness-check system; Stage 4 mental health competency is what makes that system actually catch psychological, not just physical, struggle.
- **Watch for and address supporter burnout:** Chapter 11's Tier 4 explicitly names caregiver/responder burnout as a real risk; a genuinely mature community mental health network includes support for the supporters, not just more training for more people.

Stage 4 Learning Path

Resource	Cost / Format	Notes
Utah Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) program	Training program; exam fee applies	sumh.utah.gov/education/certification/peersupportspecialists. Requires 1+ year of documented recovery.
Mental Health First Aid Instructor certification	Program and travel costs vary	mentalhealthfirstaid.org/individuals/certification-process. Requires a completed MHFA course within the past 3 years.
NAMI Utah and county behavioral health agencies	Free to engage with	Direct contact for community-scale program design, volunteer coordination, and current local resources.

Self-Check: Have You Actually Arrived?

The real test of Stage 4 isn't the credential; it's whether your community now has more than one trained peer supporter because of your direct effort, and whether your household or neighborhood's wellness-check system has actually identified and connected someone in psychological distress to real support.

A Suggested Learning Sequence

The two tracks (individual crisis response, peer support) build on each other closely here. As a rough guide, not a requirement:

- **Weeks 1–2:** Stage 1: practice the PFA framework, memorize crisis routing logic, understand the SAMHSA six-phase model.
- **1–3 months:** Stage 2: get QPR and Mental Health First Aid certified, practice the direct suicide-risk question out loud.
- **6–12 months:** Stage 3: build sustained-support and means-restriction comfort, volunteer as a support-group co-facilitator.
- **Ongoing:** Stage 4: pursue CPSS certification if lived experience and interest align, consider becoming a Mental Health First Aid Instructor, and start recruiting and training others.

At a Glance: Mental Health Deep Dive

A single-page reference for planning purposes. This does not replace the detailed guidance above, and it does not replace professional mental health care; use it to see how the four stages scale, and cross-reference against Chapter 11's tiers, which describe what a household needs to have and do rather than how skilled it needs to be.

Stage	Focus	Key Milestone	Primary Resource
Stage 1: Foundations	PFA framework and crisis-resource routing, no certification yet	Can recite PFA and 988/211/911 routing from memory	Listen, Protect, Connect handbook
Stage 2: Applied Practice	Standardized short certification and practiced conversation	Holds current QPR and Mental Health First Aid certification	NAMI Utah QPR, Mental Health First Aid
Stage 3: Self-Sufficiency	Sustained support and group facilitation experience	Comfortable with means-restriction conversation; real group facilitation experience	Utah Suicide Prevention training network
Stage 4: Mastery & Teaching	Professional-adjacent credential, community network building	Recruited/trained another peer supporter; helped run a real wellness-check catch	Utah CPSS certification, MHFA Instructor