

The HSP Challenge

How can humanitarian standards help YOU in a crisis?

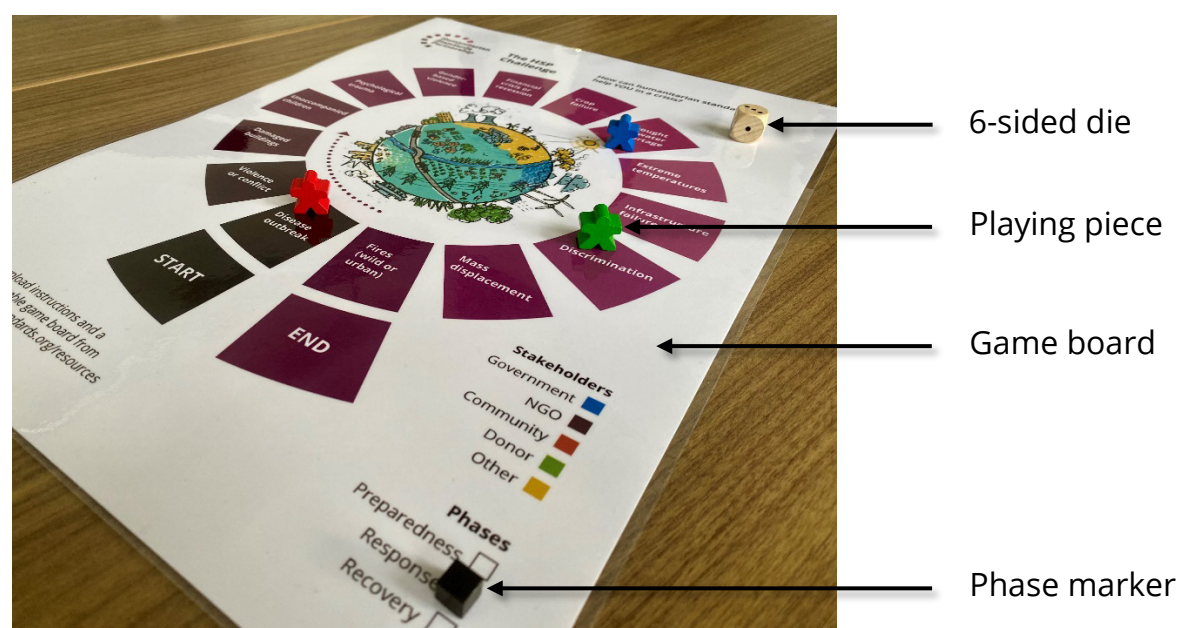
Learning objective

The purpose of this game is to demonstrate in a fun and engaging way the usefulness of different sets of minimum humanitarian standards to different actors at different stages in a crisis. Please find below our recommendations for playing the game, but feel free to adapt them.

Game pieces

To play this game, you will need a game board; a standard 6-sided die; a phase marker; one playing piece per person or team of people (2 to 5 players/teams); and a smartphone (or a computer), **one per person**, to access the [Interactive Handbook](#) – unless you have printed copies of all HSP handbooks!

We also recommend a set of HSP postcards for quick reference.



You can download a game board (including one that is ready to play and a blank one that you can customize) and the HSP postcards from the Humanitarian Standards (HSP) website:

<https://hspstandards.org/resources/#section-1>

Setup

1. **Prepare the game board:** There are two options here:
 - a. **Use the pre-prepared board:** This is ready to play and requires no further preparation.
 - b. **Use the blank board:** If using the blank board, there is an additional step which is to collectively decide a set of 14 challenges/events/risks, and which stakeholders the players will represent. In this case, agree the context first (step 3 below), then ask participants what are the top challenges, events or risks that they might face in this context and write them into the blank spaces on the game board.
2. **Assign a playing piece and a role to each player** (randomly or by selection):
blue for a government actor, purple for an NGO representative, red for a community member and green for a donor. Use the yellow playing piece for another role of your choice. If you are playing with fewer than five people, ensure there is always a community member.

If you are a larger group, you could have several boards, or you could use a single board and organise people into 4 or 5 groups, assigning a role to each group.
3. **Agree on a context.** This should include a disaster or crisis (e.g., an earthquake or a military incursion) which is *expected* to happen and may include a geographical area – but this should not be too specific unless all players have a shared knowledge of one location. For an international group of, instead of selecting a known place, agree on a couple of defining contextual factors such as cold vs. hot climate and rural vs. urban.
4. **Introductions:** Based on the agreed context, each player should take it in turns to briefly introduce themselves. For example, the government actor could decide to represent a national or local government, a ministry (e.g. of Health), a tribal leader, or the general of a military junta that is effectively in power over the chosen area.

***Note:** Whatever role you choose, you must prioritise the best interests of the affected community over any other objectives. While this may not be the case in real life, the game will not work if you take an adversarial or cynical approach.*
5. Place all playing pieces on the START space.
6. Place the phase marker on the space marked *Preparedness*. Remember that as the game starts, the expected disaster or crisis has not yet happened.

Gameplay

The community member goes first. Play then proceeds clockwise.

1. On your turn, roll the die and move that many spaces around the board in a clockwise direction.

If you land in a space already occupied by another player, immediately move your counter forwards to the next available empty space.

2. Based on where you have landed, you must now search for guidance in one of the HSP handbooks relevant to the **event** (indicated on the space where your counter is on the game board), the agreed **context**, who you are (your **role**), and what **phase** of the crisis you are in (as indicated by the phase marker).

Tip: *We strongly recommend performing keyword searches in the Interactive Handbook when looking for relevant guidance. You may find success by combining the event and phase to make a search term – perhaps even your role and some contextual words, e.g., hot or cold.*

Note: *While you are searching for guidance, all other players should use this time (you may wish to impose a limit of 5 minutes) to also search for guidance based on the same event, context and phase, and their role.*

You may interact with other players, but ultimately you should determine one action that you will take. Refer to the example below.

Play then passes to the player on your left.

Progression of the response

When **one** player has made **one** complete lap of the board (by landing on or passing the *Disease outbreak* space), the expected disaster or crisis occurs, and the *Response* phase begins. Regardless of each player's individual progression around the board, everyone now looks for guidance relevant to Response.

When one player (not necessarily the same player that completed the first lap first) has made **two** complete laps of the board, the crisis or spike abates, and the *Recovery* phase begins.

Game end

When one player has made **three** complete laps of the board, the game ends immediately.

Playing tips

This is a cooperative (not competitive) role-playing game which is supposed to be played with a positive mindset. Why not adopt “Yes, and...” thinking?¹ That is, when discussing guidance, every sentence should start with “Yes, and...”.

When it is not your turn, don’t dominate the active player; take a supporting role and be prepared to give advice if you are asked for it.

Some combinations of context, role, phase and event might not make any sense. If this happens, don’t spend ages developing contrived narratives. Simply move your playing piece to the next available space and continue.

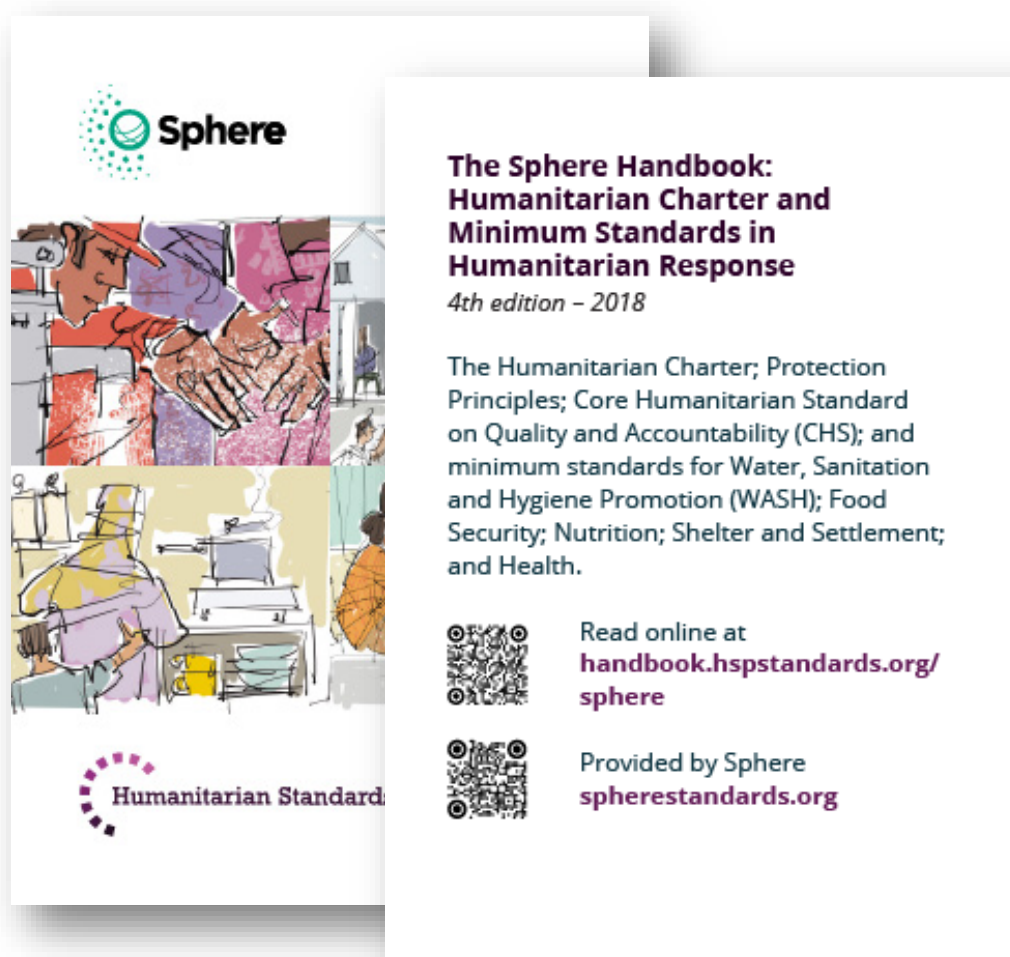


Image: The postcards (Sphere postcard shown as an example) include a summary of the contents of each handbook and links to the Handbook on the Interactive Handbook and the website(s) of the supplier(s).

¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yes,_and...

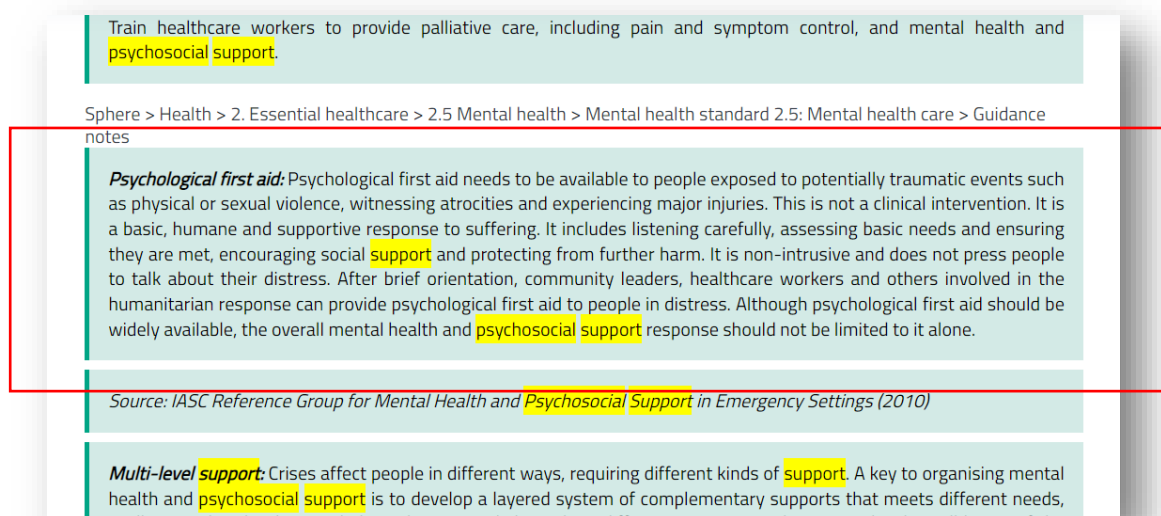
Example

Players agree that the context is a hot country experiencing sectarian violence. The community in question is currently peaceful, but it is only a matter of time before the violence spreads to this area.

The NGO player has decided to represent a community-based organisation with a diverse range of activities and some deeper expertise in agriculture and food security. On her first turn (with the game therefore in the *Preparedness* phase), the NGO player rolls a five and lands on the *Psychological trauma* event space.

Depending on the context and the event, players may need to elaborate the context: *People in the community are already highly concerned about the violence in neighbouring communities, and some have already lost relatives. When the fighting comes to this community, some people are likely to experience physical violence and more extreme psychological trauma.*

The NGO player flicks through the HSP postcards and notices that the Sphere Handbook includes a chapter on Health. She scans the QR code on the Sphere card which takes her to the Sphere Handbook on the Interactive Handbook. She searches for **psychosocial support preparedness**.



The fifth result looks interesting, so she clicks through to this Guidance note in the *Mental health care* standard.

As her action, she decides to work with local healthcare providers to organize a series of psychosocial first aid orientation sessions.