CRISIS INTERVENTION STRATEGIES
Boilerplate Outline

LEARNING OBJECTIVES[*]

Knowledge:

K1. The trainee will be able to identify how to intervene with client families impacted by a life experience that is beyond their control.

K2. The trainee will be able to understand and identify how to utilize crisis intervention strategies with families at risk.

K3. The trainee will be able to describe common family dynamics that can contribute to a crisis.

K4. The trainee will be able to explain at least three effective crisis intervention techniques that can be used to assist families in crisis.

Skills:

S1. Given a role play or case scenario, the trainee will be to identify the crisis/es in the scenario and describe how to apply specific crisis intervention strategies in order to insure child safety, well-being and permanence.

Values:

V1. The trainee will be able to value the effect of culture on the reaction of an individual to a situation considered a "crisis", their response to intervention by "outsiders" to the situation.

RELATED TITLE IV-E COMPETENCIES:

1.5 Worker is able to maintain collaborative relationships with individuals, Groups, community based organizations and government agencies to advocate for equity and availability of culturally sensitive resources and services.

2.18 Worker understands the dynamics of engaging and working with involuntary clients.

3.08 Worker understands crisis dynamics, identifies crisis and conducts crisis dynamics.

---

[*] **Normal font represents primary objectives.** *Italicized font represents secondary objectives.*

3.11 Worker can engage clients, especially non-voluntary and angry clients.

All Lineworker Core modules have the following overarching themes addressed (as appropriate to content) Cultural Competency, Welfare and Institution Codes, Values and Ethics

Training Content

1. Introduction
    A.   Review of course and learning objectives, agenda, and handouts
    B.   Brief discussion of pertinent section(s) of NASW Code of Ethics
    C.   Brief discussion of crisis intervention theory and history of crisis intervention

2. Overview/Definition
    A.   Definition of crisis
    B.   Crisis as opportunity
    C.   Elements of a crisis
    D.   Definition of crisis intervention
        The purposeful activities and involvement of child welfare and other professionals in a helping capacity at the point the family is in crisis. The basis for intervention involves moving the family from emotional disorganization to rational problem solving through counseling and other resource acquisition. (Brittain, 2004)

3. Crisis Intervention
    A.   Phases of a crisis
    B.   Crisis risk factors
- Unemployment, underemployment, or dissatisfaction with one's present occupation
- Drug abuse (including alcohol)
- Difficulty coping with minor problems (problems encountered by the general population on a daily basis)
- Low self-esteem, persistent feelings of insecurity
- History of unresolved crises or emotional disorders
- Underutilization of support systems and minimal access to support systems –personal, family, social
- Few permanent relationships
- Feelings of alienation from others
- Demonstrates impulsiveness and an uncaring attitude
- History of frequent personal injuries and/or frequent involvement in property damage incidents (Hendricks & McKean, 1995)

    C.   Person's perception of the event

4. **Characteristics of People in Crisis**

5. Psychological Effects of a Crisis
> The trainer will facilitate a discussion and provide examples of modal psychological effects of crisis:
>> A. Disorganized thinking
>> - Lost their equilibrium and experiencing higher levels of arousal that interfere with their ability to function normally
>> - Heightened emotions impair their ability to think rationally
>> - Because they fell powerless and helpless, individuals may experience extreme levels of physiological arousal in the form of anxiety—the natural human response to threat and danger. This anxiety serves to disrupt their ability to think clearly—interferes with attempts to cope with an already incomprehensible circumstance.
>> B. Preoccupation with insignificant activities
>> - Appear to lack a clear sense of purpose
>> - Generally have difficulty articulating their true needs in an understandable way
>> C. Hostility/Dissociation
>> - Crises have the potential to disconnect individuals from necessary sources of support. When the need for attachment is not answered due to other's misunderstanding of, fear of, anger with, disappointment in, or disagreement with the individual in crisis, that person feels utterly abandoned.
>> - Without the sense of security provided by others, the individual's already extreme state of physiological arousal is exacerbated.
>> D. Impulsivity
>> - The individual focuses on moment-to-moment survival, which complicates the situation, serving to undermine the sense of personal competence and effectiveness while increasing anxiety even more. To do anything is seen as better than doing nothing.
>> - Individuals whose heightened state of anxiety and reduced self-esteem can cause them to react recklessly.
>> E. Dependence
>> - When all roads back to equilibrium seem blocked, the individual's ability to cope becomes overwhelmed.
>> - As every attempt to deal with the crisis seemingly meets with failure, the individual learns to do nothing. This state of "learned helplessness" is characterized by constricted thinking and an inability to see even the most obvious solutions.
>> F. Defensiveness
>> - Fear of being judged, "controlled"
>> - Fear of having their autonomy jeopardized and feel intimidated
>> - Blame others for the crisis

6. SW activities with individuals and families in crisis
    A. Assessment
        Where the person is now
- The individual is already in the midst of considerable of considerable internal turmoil

        Client strengths
- Age dependant
- Relevance to crisis resolution

        Cultural considerations
- SW must be prepared to acknowledge and respect culture and lifestyle of the family that is different from the SW's own. It may be helpful to ask for help in understanding differences.

    B. Family dynamics in a crisis
        What happens to the rest of the family

7. Goals of crisis intervention
    A. 3 primary goals for intervention in cases of child maltreatment:
        1. the immediate safety of the child/children must be established;
        2. help and support need to be provided to the entire family unit experiencing the crisis; and,
        3. it must be determined if W&I and/or criminal codes have been violated.
    B. "Best practices" systems level interventions
        multidisciplinary team approach, family strengths-based as ideal
        current models (family conferencing, wraparound, collaboration with Tribal representatives, etc.)
    C. Cultural Considerations
        1. Finding culturally competent resources.
        2. Ensuring the intervention 'fits' the family's perceived needs, culture
        3. Cultural competence in assessing the crisis, family's understanding of/reaction to it
        4. Involving the family in crisis resolution: cultural variations
- Is it expected within this culture?
- Would it cause loss of face for the individual/family?
- Might it create a greater crisis, such as permanently isolating or shunning the child or other family member perceived to be the cause of the crisis?

8. Special Considerations
    1. Substance abuse/relapse
    2. Intimate Partner Violence (Domestic violence) victim decides to leave
    3. Assessing for dangerousness/worker safety concern
    4. Mental illness
    5. Poverty

9. Counter transference
       1. Understanding your own reactions
       2. Coping with your own feelings
       3. Risk/ personal safety; when to get help (refer to personal safety module)

Closure and Evaluation