Crisis Intervention and De-escalation Techniques

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Crisis Intervention

- **Definition of a Crisis**
  - Crisis by definition is short-term and overwhelming and involves a disruption of an individual's normal and stable state where the usual methods of coping and problem solving do not work
Crisis Intervention

Crisis intervention is generally characterized by:

- a here and now orientation
- time limited interactions
- a view of the individual's behavior as understandable (rather than a pathological) reaction to stress
- the CIT officer may be expected to analyze the situation quickly and be very active and directive
Crisis Intervention

Guidelines for Crisis Intervention:

- Immediate intervention will interrupt a prolonged crisis

- Action. Be active in helping, exploring and resolving

- Limited goals. Focus only on goals related to addressing the crisis

- Build hope and expectations. Resolution is possible
Crisis Intervention

- Foster support because lack of it can lead to increased negative outcomes
- Focus on resolution of solving the problem(s) underlying the crisis
- Build self-image and self-confidence
Crisis Intervention

Crisis for People with Mental Illnesses:

- Most people with serious mental illness have symptoms that change over time – they get better or worse as a result of normal life stressors

- The nature of symptoms can lead to a crisis

- Many people with serious mental illness have difficulty coping with stressful situations

- When person stops taking medication and symptoms increase
The Logic of De-escalation

- If you take a LESS authoritative, LESS controlling, LESS confrontational approach, you actually will have MORE control.

- You are trying to give the consumer a sense that he or she is in control.

- Why? Because he or she is in a crisis, which by definition means the consumer is feeling out of control. The consumer’s normal coping measures are not working at this time.
Crisis Intervention and De-escalation

C.A.F MODEL – Calm, Assess, Facilitate

Calm: to decrease the emotional, behavioral, and mental intensity of a situation

Assess: to determine the most appropriate response as presented by the facts

Facilitate: to promote the most appropriate resolution based on an assessment of the facts presented
Benefits of the C.A.F. Model

- C.A.F. is a “fluid process”
- C.A.F. helps to define the intervention
- C.A.F. provides a blueprint
- C.A.F enhances officer safety
CALM: Response, Communication and De-escalation

- **Goal:** to decrease the emotional, physical and mental stress levels of a situation using verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques

- The officer’s initial response can often facilitate the direction of the encounter toward a more practical and appropriate resolution
Guidelines for De-escalation

- Maintain safe distance (5-6 ft or 21 ft rule)
- Use clear voice tone
- Use volume lower than that of the aggressive individual
- Use relaxed, well-balanced, non-threatening posture (yet maintaining tactical awareness)
- Set limits
Guidelines for De-escalation (con’t)

- Be active in helping
- Build hope – resolution is possible
- Focus on strengths
- Present self as a calming influence
- CIT officer demonstrates confidence and compassion
- Do not personalize
Guidelines for De-escalation (con’t)

- Remove distractions, disruptive or upsetting influences
- Be aware of body language/congruency
- Be aware that uniform, tools can be intimidating
Guidelines for De-escalation (con’t)

- Be consistent
- Use “I” statements
- Here and now
- Validation/acceptance
- No promises you cannot keep
Guidelines for De-escalation (con’t)

- Recognize that mentally ill person may be overwhelmed by sensations, thoughts, frightening beliefs, sounds, environment – provide careful explanations, instructions

- Determine need for food, water and basic needs

- Use active listening skills
The Negotiator’s Role: Influencing Behavioral Change

Active Listening is the foundation that supports everything else
Effective Communication

- 70% of communication is misunderstood

- Effective communication is defined as passing information between one person and another that is mutually understood
Introduce Yourself

- An introduction promotes communication
- Hi, my name is Doug (or Deputy Smith). I am a CIT officer with the Sheriff’s Department.
- Can you tell me your name?
- State what you see/know (“I can see you’re upset.”)
- State or convey that you are there to help.
- Be prepared to explain the reason you are there (e.g., a neighbor called to say someone is upset)
Active Listening Skills

- Paraphrasing/Restatement: summarizing what the person said
- Reflection
- Attending
- Open-ended questions: requires more detailed answers
- Minimal Encouragers
- Effective Pauses
- Silence: sends the message that you are willing to listen
Restatement

Restating or *Feeding Back* the facts of the person’s crisis situation

Person in Crisis:

“I stopped taking my medicine after I was fired and I’m sleeping in my car.”

CIT Officer:

“You recently stopped taking your medicine, you lost your job, and you don’t have a place to stay.”
Restatement

The Facts

Consumer: “I started back using and me and my old lady went to fighting. She left me. I didn’t go in today. It was my last chance. I’m fired. It’s just not worth it anymore.”

CIT Officer: “Let me see if I understand. You’ve been using again and you and your wife have been fighting. You lost your job. And you want to give up.”
Accurate Reflection

Reflecting or *Feeding Back* the person’s *feelings* about the crisis

**Person in Crisis:**

“*I’m afraid of sleeping in the car. How can I ever get a room without money?*”

**CIT Officer:**

“You’re feeling scared and depressed because you don’t have any money and no place to stay.”
Reflection

The Feelings

Consumer: “I’m a real fuck up. I had two years. I was going to meetings. My wife and I were doing okay. Work was good. I can’t do anything right.”

CIT: “You sound embarrassed and pretty hopeless about getting your life back together.”
Empathy: An Essential Concept

“Identification / understanding of another’s situation, feelings and motive.”

Understanding is Not Agreement
Empathy: An Essential Concept

Empathy is not Sympathy

- Sympathy - “...an expression of pity or sorrow for the distress of another...”
  American Heritage Dictionary

- Pity and sorrow are not productive

It’s not necessary to actually “feel what they feel” to provide empathy
Rapport

Relationship of mutual trust
Communicating Acceptance

Person in Crisis
- Fearful
- Anxious
- Angry / hostile
- Insecure
- Paranoid
- Acting strangely
- Speaking bizarrely
- Poor personal hygiene

CIT Officer
- Respectful Introduction
- “Please”
- “Thank you”
- Smiling when appropriate
- Considers: “What if this person in crisis were a member of my family?”
Effective Verbal Intervention Must Be:

- Specific – precise, explicit, clear
- Concise – short, to the point, simple
- Directive – instructive, communicating clearly what you want the individual to do

*Broken Record Technique* – purposeful use of repetition
ASSESSMENT: Evaluate the Situation

- Goal: To determine the most appropriate response as presented by the facts
- Assess for a mental illness and/or substance use
- Assess for Orientation (time, place, person)
ASSESSMENT (con’t)

- Focus on verbal, behavioral and environmental indicators
- Be aware of signs for suicide and/or violence
- Medical emergencies
- Medical/physical conditions that could mimic mental illness
Assessing- B.E.F.A.S.T.

- B – Behaviors
- E - Emotional/Mood
- F – False Beliefs and Perceptions
- A – Appearance
- S – Speech
- T – Thinking Form
Assessing – B.E.F.A.S.T.

- **B - Behavior**: actions, gait, movement, mannerism
- **E - Emotions/Mood**: steady or sustained emotional state assess, expressions and feeling tone
- **F - False beliefs & Perceptions**: delusions and Hallucinations
- **A - Appearance**: dress, grooming, posture, gestures, facial expressions
- **S - Speech**: rate, volume, and pace, abnormalities
- **T - Thinking form** (flow) of thought
Strategies for Frequently Encountered Situations
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- Psychotic (Disorganized Thinking) and verbally aggressive

Allow person to vent energy, maintain safe distance, talk in low voice, broken record, reassure
Strategies for Frequently Encountered Situations

- Hallucinations

Validate the experience for the person, can indicate you don’t hear the voices, have person focus on you, offer help, safety
Strategies for Frequently Encountered Situations

- **Delusional statements** *(may include paranoia)*

  Recognize their view, indicate it is not your view, but you are willing to help, do not argue or debate, focus person on what you need them to do
Strategies for Frequently Encountered Situations

- Compulsive Talking (mania)

  Ask concise, specific, concrete questions; use broken record technique
Strategies for Frequently Encountered Situations

- **Intoxication**

  Let them vent, listen, use a calm, even tone, move person away from others if possible, be reassuring
Strategies for Frequently Encountered Situations

- Depression

  Active listening, empathy, take time, reassure, offer hope, validate feelings
Strategies for Frequently Encountered Situations

Suicidal Person:

- What position is person putting you in (consider suicide by cop)
- Present in calm, understanding, non judgmental manner
- Listen
- Emphasize temporary time-frame of crisis
- Suggest alternatives
- Emphasize effect on survivors
- Lethality assessment (plan, lethal, access, support)
- Be active in offering hope and help
DONT’S

- Use Aluminum Foil
- Listen forever
- Argue with logic of delusions
- Agree with delusions/no deception
- Let your guard down
- Assume condition will remain constant
DO’s

- Get comfortable asking questions
- Try to understand cause of behavior
- Hand off as necessary
- Seek consultation
- Know your limits
FACILITATE: Response Resolution

The goal is to promote the most appropriate disposition/resolution to the crisis situation based on the assessment of the facts gathered, policy and legal obligations of the officer.
Tips for Effective Facilitation

- Appropriate assessment directs appropriate facilitation
- Know your community resources
- Be flexible with alternatives when appropriate
Courage

“Each time someone stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope.”

Robert F. Kennedy
OFFICER SAFETY
Is The PRIORITY