

Four Steps to Effective Crisis Intervention

Crisis Intervention Network

Step #1: Listen

- Elements of Listening
- Establish rapport and trust.
- Identify precipitating problems.
- Help the person deal with, identify, and diffuse feelings.
- Techniques for Listening
- Use first names, ask if it OK to use the person's first name.
- Use content questions.
- Ask or use feeling questions or statements.

Step #2: Assess

- Elements of Assessing
 - Determine the severity of the crisis.
 - Assess potential lethality or physical harm to the person or others.
 - Identify coping patterns, strengths and resources
- Techniques for Assessing
 - Find out if the person is suicidal, homicidal, or both.
 - Find out to what extent the crisis has disrupted the person's normal life pattern.
Are daily routines with family, friends, work, etc. affected?
 - Find out if the level of tension has distorted the perception of reality.
 - Find out how the person deals with anxiety, tension, or depression. Have they been proactive?
 - Find out what coping methods were used in the past. Do they have a variety?
 - Find out if family and social resources are potential resources. Are the resources positive or negative?
 - Find out what the person used as support systems in the past. Are they present, absent, or exhausted? Can they combine or use the systems in a new way?

Step #3: Develop an Action Plan

- Elements of Developing an Action Plan
 - Selectively choose and use appropriate approaches to action planning.
 - Assist in modifying previous inadequate coping skills.
 - Negotiate a contract or action plan.
 - Select appropriate referral resources.
 - Plan for immediate action and implementation.
- Techniques for Developing an Action Plan
 - Use three basic approaches:
 1. Start by being non-directive.
 2. Be collaborative by working together on a joint plan.
 3. Be directive if the person does not or will not make a plan.
 - When making an action plan, keep it simple and manageable.
 - Keep the action plan short-term, 24 hours to three days.
 - Keep the action plan achievable and focused.
 - Plan for follow-up provisions.

Step #4: Close

- Elements of Closing
 - Review completed action plan.
 - Do anticipatory planning for building new ties with resources.
 - Plan and provide follow-up.
 - Keep the action plan achievable and focused.
 - Plan for follow-up provisions.