



A program of Pathways to Housing PA

Crisis Intervention & De-escalation

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www.HousingFirstUniversity.org



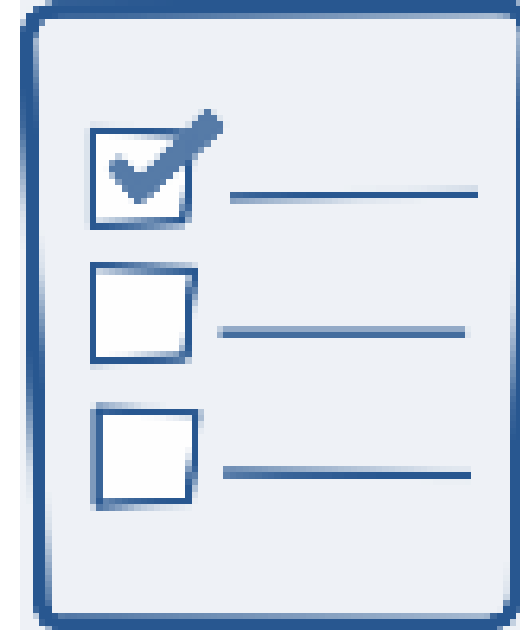
Housekeeping

- We invite you to be present with us!
- If you are seeking CEUs...
 - Stay for the duration of the training
 - Participate in discussion
 - Respond to all poll questions
 - Cameras on!
- Questions and comments welcome throughout
- Course evaluation is required to receive a certificate
- Closed captioning is available, or send a private chat to request any other disability accommodations



Today's Agenda

- ✓ What is a crisis?
- ✓ What causes or contributes to the onset of crisis?
- ✓ Signs & symptoms of crises
- ✓ Preparation
- ✓ The crisis wave
- ✓ Intervention & de-escalation skills
- ✓ Ending & follow-up



Learning Objectives

- Describe the Thoughts-Feelings-Actions cycle
- Identify precipitating factors to the onset of crises
- Differentiate de-escalation/intervention strategies for stages on the crisis wave



Reflection

Think of a difficult interaction you had with a client recently and rate it on a scale of 1-10



1-Tea & Hugs

10-Fistfight



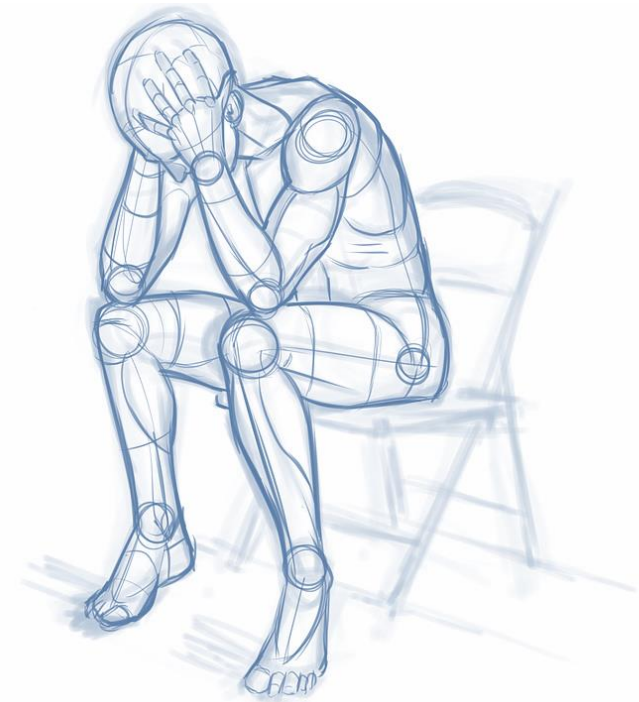
What would it take to improve that rating by just one or two points?

The What & Why of Crisis



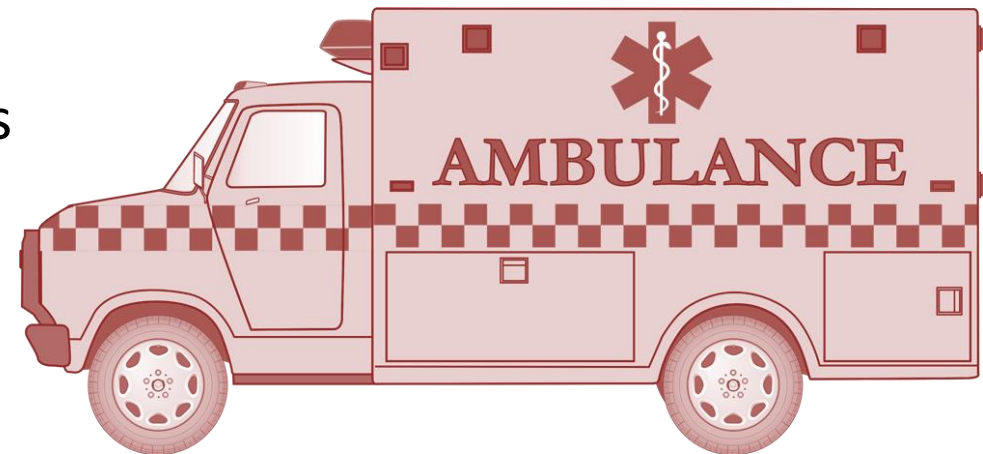
Defining “Crisis”

- A disruption or breakdown in a person’s normal pattern of functioning
- Cannot be resolved by a person’s usual problem-solving resources/skills
- Often caused by
 - Family strife
 - Economic hardship
 - Community/environmental conditions
 - Major life events
 - Natural disasters



Problems & Emergencies

- A ***problem*** that can be solved without outside help/resources is not a crisis
- An ***emergency*** is a sudden need that places someone's life in danger and requires the immediate response of a trained emergency response professional (911)
- Three basic elements of a ***crisis***
 - A stressful situation
 - Difficulty in coping
 - Intervention takes place within 24-72 hours

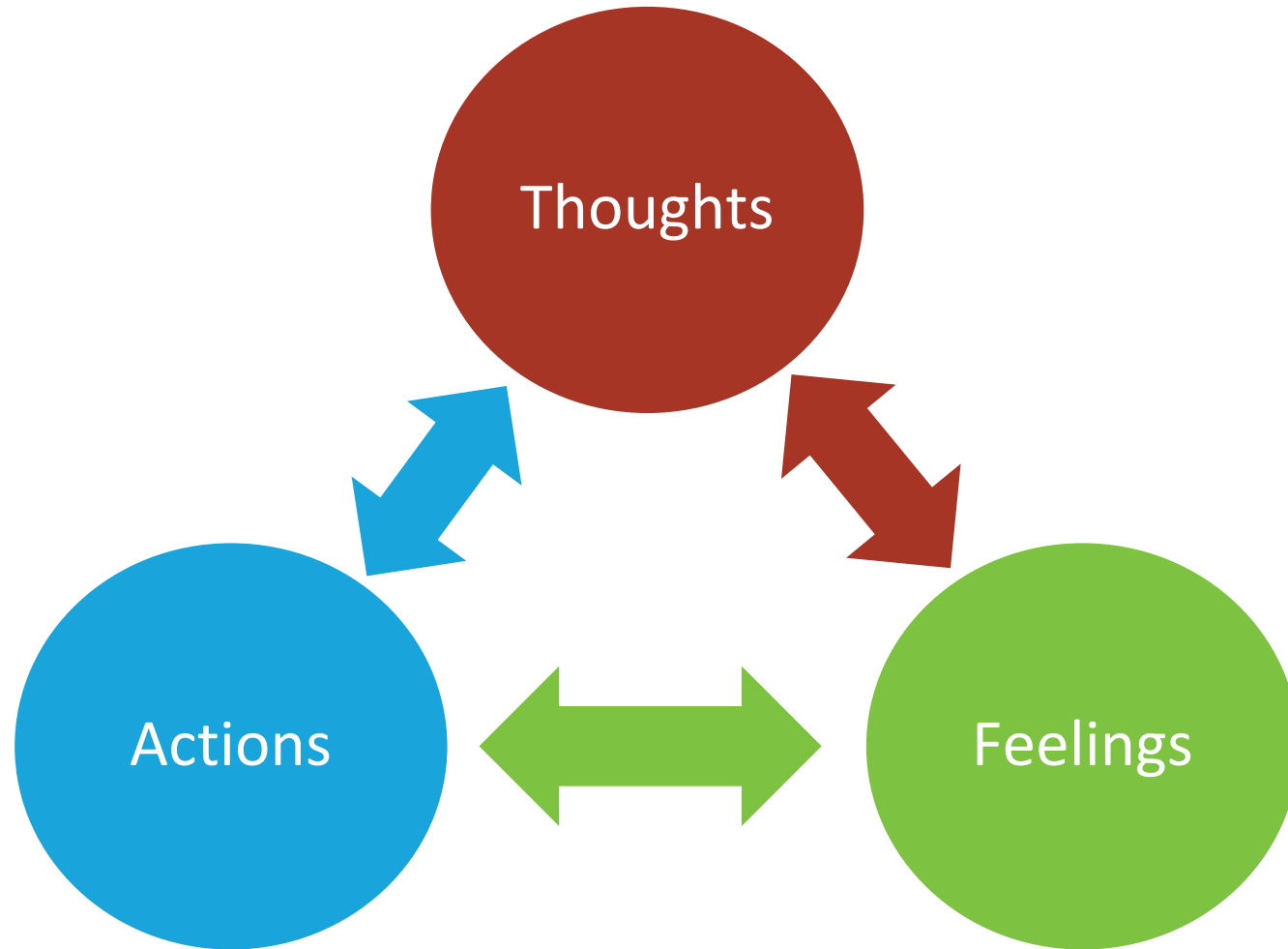


Crisis in the Workplace

- What does crisis usually look like at your organization or with your clients?
 - When someone is yelling and staff can't calm them down
 - Threat of violence from an outside party
 - Acute medical issues
 - Significant mental health impairment
 - Significant substance use issues

A situation outside of the ordinary where typical interventions, problem-solving, and coping skills are not working.

The Thoughts-Feelings-Actions Cycle

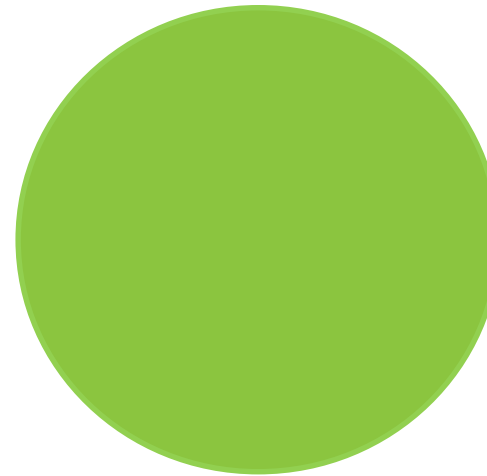
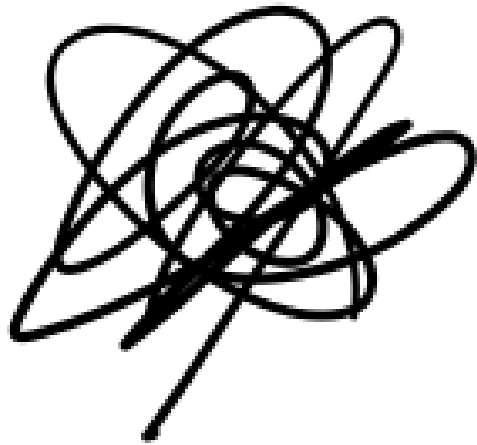


Signs of Crisis

- Raised Voice
- High-pitched Voice
- Rapid Speech
- Pacing
- Excessive Sweating
- Balled Fists
- Excessive Hand Gestures
- Erratic Movements
- Fidgeting
- Aggressive Posture
- Shaking



Solid Object Relationship Model



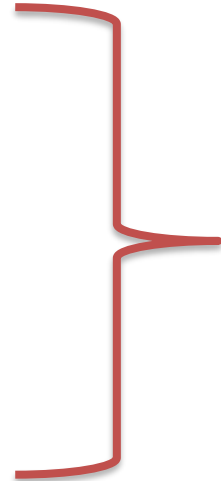
Be Prepared



Self-Awareness

What sets you off?

- Triggers
- Fears
- Anxieties



How do you set these aside in a challenging situation or a crisis?



Preparation

- What do I need to do to get in the mindset for the person I'm serving?
- You may have a full day or seconds to do this
- Consider personal history, history with organization, physical needs/accommodations, cultural factors, relationship to authority
- Starting new every day

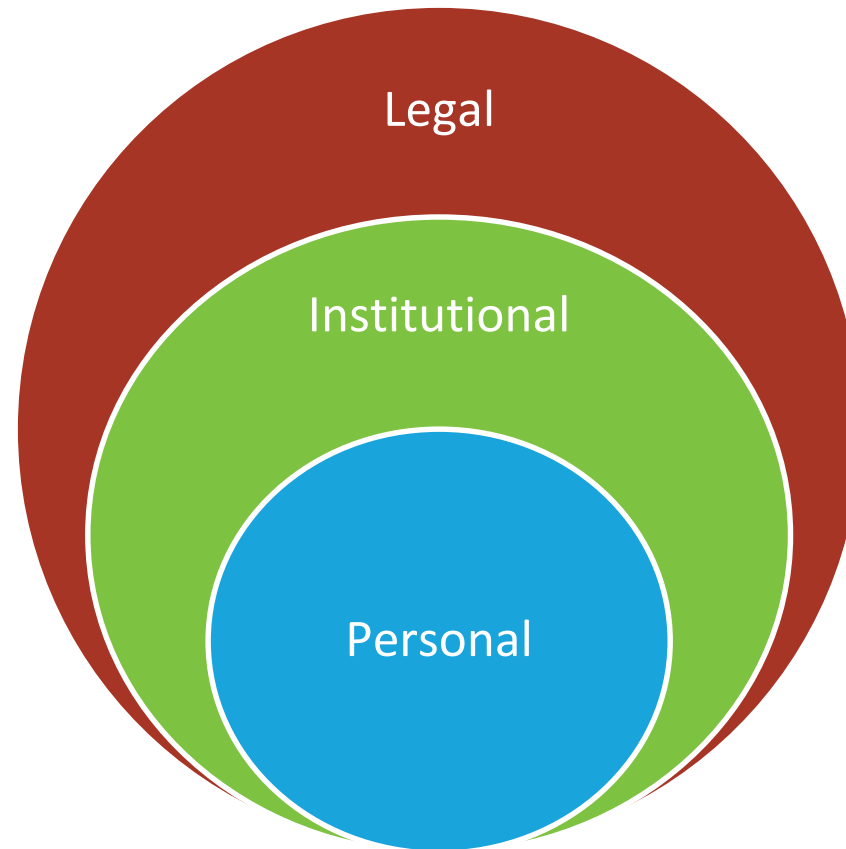


Is this in my wheelhouse?

- Practice at your level of expertise
- Fulfill your organizational mission
- If it's not appropriate to proceed, end gracefully & refer (internal or external)
- Be prepared with next steps for both a positive/successful de-escalation or a negative/unsuccessful de-escalation



Know your boundaries



The Crisis Wave



Winding Up

Agitation

Verbal Abuse

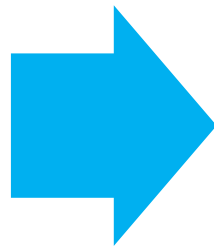
Explosion

Let Down

Winding Up

Participant

- Pacing
- Physical tension
- Increased volume



Service Provider

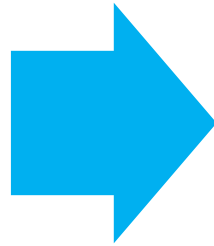
- Relationship skills are your primary tool
- Active listening
- Acknowledge feelings
- Communicate dignity and respect



Agitation

Participant

- Verbal cues
 - “I’m getting angry”
 - “I don’t want to talk to you”
- Questioning staff
- Increased volume
- Inability to follow staff directives or requests



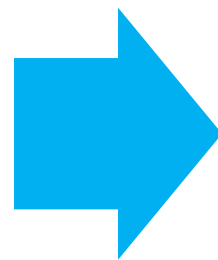
Service Provider

- Steady, calm voice
- Eyes at the same height if possible
- Relaxed face and body
- Avoid touch

Verbal Abuse

Participant

- Yelling, screaming, or cursing
- Threatening others
- Direct challenges to staff or other participants



Service Provider

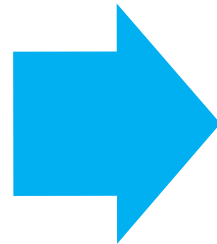
- Limit setting
- List consequences without threats
- External controls are institutional, not personal
- Empathize with feelings not behaviors
 - “I understand you’re frustrated, but it isn’t okay to threaten staff.”
- Respond selectively
- Give choices whenever possible



Explosion (Crisis)

Participant

- Physical expressions of tension begin
- Participant may harm or threaten to harm themselves, others, or physical property
- Severely abusive language, sexual harassment, or other safety concerns may emerge



Service Provider

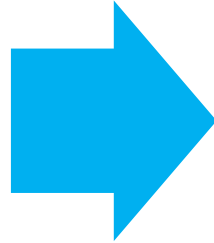
- Manage yourself
- Reach out to additional supports if possible
- Ensure safety of staff and participants
- Pay attention to objects that may be thrown or used as weapons
- Be mindful of your exit— don't get cornered
- Be sure others clients and staff are safe
- Trust your gut when it comes to safety
- End the encounter if needed



Let Down

Participant

- May deescalate slowly
- Could return to other phases in crisis wave
- Big feelings
 - Guilt/ Shame
 - Embarrassment
 - Attempts at explaining behavior



Service Provider

- Support efforts to regain self-control
- If participant needs rest, let them do so.
 - Relaxation exercises if appropriate.
- Reestablish contact with participant
- Acknowledge self-control being exhibited by participant

Safety



The feeling of safety is subjective

Clinicians may need to take extreme action when our own sense of safety or the safety of a participant is jeopardized



Police involvement can be an extremely unsafe experience for people in crisis and those experiencing mental health episodes



Winding UP

- Relationship skills
- Active listening
- Acknowledge feelings
- Speak calmly

Agitation/Verbal Abuse

- Limit setting
- Respond selectively
- Offer safe choices
- List potential consequences

Explosion (Crisis)

- Engage other staff or supports
- End the interaction
- In extreme cases: 911

Movement between stages in an interaction is expected.

Pitfalls of Crisis Care

- To what extent are our crisis services places of healing and/or injury to diverse clients
- Institutional, racial, generational trauma
- Fear of implicit bias from staff
- Policies informed by racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia



Criteria for Ending



Ending Gracefully

- How do you end sessions that aren't working?
- Maintain all the supportive elements previously discussed
 - *Be respectful, authentic, and concrete*
- Be aware of your own presentation and tap out/hand off if needed
- Be appropriately honest



Communication & Follow-up

- What is necessary for services to continue?
- Safety List
- Could we just restart at another time, or with adjustments?
- Was there a misinterpretation of your support aggravated by external factors?
- If discharge is necessary, what referral or resources will you provide and how?



Debrief

- Be sure to debrief with coworkers, team members, and a supervisor after a major incident
- Talk it through & plan for next time
 - What worked? What can be improved?
 - Case conference?
- Debriefing reduces compassion fatigue
- Practice Rational Detachment



Let's Practice



Fist Fight or Tea & Hugs?

- Revisit the scenarios you discussed in the beginning of this session
- Try to utilize at least 2-3 of the skills we've just discussed
- How would those new approaches have changed the outcome?
- Think of a situation that may require these new tools. How do you think it will go?



Choose an Intervention!

Throwing a book
across the room

Making threats of
self-harm

Shouting insults

Shouting general
threats of physical
harm

Holding and
waving a mug

Standing close
trying to
“intimidate”

Two participants
yelling at one
another

Winding UP

Agitation / Verbal
abuse

Explosion



Remember

- Crisis is different from a problem or an emergency, and can be brought on by various physical, psychological, or environmental factors.
- De-escalation requires specific skills meant to reduce tension and your intervention should match the stage along the crisis wave.
- It's about what you say, how you say it, body language, and more.
- Find a balance between support and limit-setting
- Self awareness is KEY!!!



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