

PRESERVING AND STABILIZING PLACEMENTS UTILIZING CRISIS INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

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Executive Summary

Workshop Description:

This workshop is designed to assist a variety of people involved in substitute care children and youth in child welfare. The aim is to help all of those interested in achieving permanency and reducing the need for placement changes to develop skills in crisis intervention to assist clients or caregivers who are experiencing crisis in a placement situation. The goal of such interventions will be to stabilize situations and avoid harmful breakdowns in relationships that result in placement failure.

Target audience: Professional social workers, paraprofessionals, foster and kinship caregivers involved in a variety of child welfare support services with children and youth in out-of-home placements.

Specific objectives:

- To be able to give examples of situations that meet the criteria for “crisis” situations in both personal and work experiences
- To distinguish between crisis behavior, unhealthy patterns of behavior, and “pseudo” crises
- To define the differences between a crisis, acute trauma, and post-traumatic stress disorder
- To list the elements that make a life experience a crisis
- To identify ways in which a crisis can be a danger and ways in which a crisis can be a blessing and opportunity to change situations for the better
- To analyze when a crisis situation has become chronic, rather than episodic
- To identify the five steps in the crisis cycle and how skilled interventions can be helpful in each stage
- To distinguish the individual differences and specific factors that influence whether a person will experience a crisis, for both client and service provider
- To describe the signs and symptoms of situational trauma, and to help caregivers assess when these are appropriate

- To state the guidelines for making a referral for special help
- To illustrate individual experiences in each stage of a crisis
- To understand the role of empathy as a crisis intervention skill
- To outline the importance of school attendance for a child/youth experiencing crisis
- To successfully capture the steps for building resiliency and thus enhancing the chances for success in placement
- To learn specific interventions for potentially dangerous crisis situations
- To engage in a self-assessment with regard to personal approaches to crisis situations
- To grasp the personal qualities that enable successful crisis intervention in crisis situations
- To list the six general principles of crisis intervention
- To identify the basic competencies required for successful crisis intervention

Ways that Supervisors can support the transfer of learning from the classroom to the job:

Before the training: Encourage participants to come to the workshop with specific examples of specific situations from either the present or the past in which placement was threatened by a crisis on the part of either the client (child/youth) or the caregiver, or both. Concepts presented in the workshop will be most meaningful if they can be applied to specific examples.

After the training: The supervisor can assist the participant in applying specific strategies from the workshop to specific cases where a placement is threatened either from a crisis being experienced by the child/youth or by the caregiver.

Training methods:

Lecture presentation

Literature review

Case history examples

Group discussion

Individual and group exercises

Visual aids

Flip chart/whiteboard illustrations

Videotapes: Immediate crisis intervention techniques in traumatic situations

Demonstration of Borderline Personality crisis response

Training Outline

Introduction

Individual exercise: Examples of crisis experiences of clients

Examples of crisis experiences in your own life

Follow-up – group discussion

I. Defining a crisis

A. Distinguishing between crisis, acute trauma, and post-traumatic stress

B. Elements inherent in a crisis

II. Crisis situations as both a danger and an opportunity (presentation; participants share examples from their own life; participants give examples of clients benefiting from crisis situations)

III. Understanding crisis and crisis responses

A. The crisis/stress cycle (visual illustration; research review)

B. Factors influencing a crisis (personal and client examples)

C. Signs and symptoms of situational trauma and delayed trauma (literature review)

D. Coping abilities during a crisis

E. Understanding behavior alarms as cries for help

1. Need for individual help (review resiliency research)

2. Indicator of a problem with the placement (review abuse in out-of-home placements)

F. Guidelines for making a referral for special help

IV. Three stages of a crisis

V. Jackson's seven stages of crisis adjustment (literature review)

VI. Crisis intervention strategies

- A. The role of providing empathy in crisis situations
- B. Specific treatment models (review various "expert" models)
- C. Treatment of crisis and trauma in school settings
- D. Building resiliency
- E. Using cognitive re-structuring to deal with crisis situations for both children/youth; and with caregivers to increase understanding of children's behavior and provide appropriate emotional distance

VII. Matching crisis intervention strategies to the mental health condition of the child/youth (review diagnostic criteria and symptom behaviors for various disorders; videotape illustration of Borderline features and PTSD)

VIII. Dealing with potentially dangerous crisis situations (review evidence-based research)

- A. Developing pro-active plans
- B. Preparing for potentially dangerous situations
- C. Developing a plan for self-control in a crisis

IX. Assessing when crisis intervention should be used to preserve a placement, and when the crisis indicates the need for a different placement

X. Self-assessment exercise

XI. Personal qualities for managing crises effectively

XII. General principles and basic competencies for crisis intervention

Lesson plan

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topics addressed</u>	<u>Teaching Methods</u>
9:00-9:30	Crisis: features, elements, definitions	Individual exercise Group sharing and discussion Definition review Multi-cultural examples
9:30-9:50	The crisis/stress cycle: pattern and interventions	Handout review
9:50-10:30	Factors influencing a crisis	Literature review Case/personal examples Videotape example
10:30-10:45	Break	
10:45-11:00	Stages of a crisis	Literature review Case examples
11:00-11:30	Behavior alarms as cries for help	Case examples Group discussion
11:30-12:00	Crisis intervention strategies	Lecture presentation Personal examples/discussion Videotape example
12:00-1:00	Lunch	
1:00-2:00	Strategies, continued Cognitive re-structuring	Review of specific models Group exercise
2:00-2:30	Dealing with potential danger	Class exercise in developing pro-active plans
2:30-2:45	Break	

2:45-3:15	Plans for self-control	Handout review and exercise Self-assessment exercise
3:15-3:45	Personal qualities for effective crisis intervention	Research review Personal examples
3:45–3 :55	Review: General principles and basic competencies	
3:55-4:00	Wrap-up and evaluation	

Transfer of Learning:

Usefulness of the workshop material will be demonstrated in the workplace when participants can:

- Distinguish between routine disruptions in placement and genuine crisis situations
- Distinguish between genuine crises and “pseudo” crises when responding to either clients or caretakers
- Support caretakers experiencing a crisis with a child sufficiently that the placement is preserved

Bibliography

Greenstone, James L. and Leviton, Sharon C. (1993). *Elements of crisis intervention: Crises and how to respond to them.*

Hillman, Jennifer L. (2002). *Crisis intervention and trauma.* Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Provides detailed information on crisis intervention complete with realistic case studies, and emphasizes how to integrate empirical research findings into theory and practice.

Rainer, Jackson P. and Brown, Frieda F. (2007). *Crisis counseling and therapy*. New York: The Haworth Press.

Book provides a systemic three-phase method of crisis intervention that is simple and practical. The authors integrate four proven theories – narrative, cognitive-behavioral, family systems, and experiential/existential – and present a new approach to crisis work. In-depth contemporary case studies and an easily-learned and implemented model of application allow for multidisciplinary approaches to treatment and more positive, constructive outcomes.

Rosenblum Behavioral Associates. *Crisis training materials*. 1228 pages. Human motivation, maladaptive, suicide, drugs, police techniques, role play, sample referrals, crisis techniques, etc. Can be contacted at 4351 Accomack Drive, Louisville, KY 40220.

Slive, Arnold B. and McConkey-Radetzki, Nancy. (2006). The utilization of residential treatment as family crisis intervention. *Journal of Child Care*, 3 (4), 59-68.

Roberts, Albert R. (Ed.) (2000). *Crisis intervention handbook: Assessment, treatment and Research: Second edition*. Oxford University Press.

Provides the mental health professional with specialized skills needed for crisis intervention and provides an interdisciplinary scope and clinical breadth. A roster of 37 expert contributors are included and cover many aspects of rapid assessment and crisis resolution as well as on protective factors and client resilience.

Slive, Arnold B. and McConkey-Radetzki, Nancy. (2005). The utilization of residential treatment as family crisis intervention. *Journal of Child Care*, 3 (4), 59-68.

Article examines crisis theory and the family life cycle as a means of understanding normative family crises and transitions. It also explores strategies for working with families within the context of residential treatment.

Van Ornum, William and Mordock, John B. *Crisis counseling with children and adolescents: A guide for non-professional counselors*. New York: Guilford

How children and adolescents think about the crisis situation is addressed. Drawing on the classic theorists on current research findings and on their own experience, the authors cover such traumatic experiences as a death in the family, sickness and hospitalization, divorce and separation, handicaps, child abuse and foster care. Includes case histories and synthesis of professional literature.

VandenBos, Gary R., and Bryant, Brenda K. (Eds.) (2005). *Cataclysms, crises, and Catastrophes: Psychology in action*. American Psychological Association. ISBN: 0-912704-77-2

Provides insight into the effects of incidents such as natural disasters, violence, crime, and terrorism. The various chapters demonstrate the interaction between psychological theory and practice, and the importance of the psychologist's ability to help ordinary individuals experiencing extraordinary stress. Includes information on: suicide, rape, wife battering, incest, loss, crime, etc.

Webb, Nancy Boyd. (2007). *Play therapy with children in crisis: Individual, group, and family treatment. Third edition*. New York: Guilford

Chapters include practical information regarding the treatment of children who have survived a wide range of traumatic events and goes beyond the basic principles of play therapy. The volume covers such far-reaching topics as differential diagnosis, trauma-focused cognitive-behavior therapy for children, and the vicarious traumatization experienced by clinicians.

Journal

Greenstone, J.L. and Rosenbluh, E.S. (Ed.s). *Emotional first aid: A journal of crisis intervention*. Individual subscription: Brunner/Mazel, \$28/year for individuals; \$46/year for institutions. Quarterly.

Resource

Rosenblum Behavioral Associates. *Crisis training materials*. 1228 pages. Human motivation, maladaptive, suicide, drugs, police techniques, role play, sample referrals, crisis techniques, etc. Can be contacted at 4351 Accomack Drive, Louisville, KY 40220.