

Crisis Intervention
2nd semester M.A.EESW
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Sos in Lifelong education extension and social work

Psychological perspective of
social work

What is Crisis??

- In mental health terms, a crisis refers not necessarily to a traumatic situation or event, but to a person's reaction to an event. One person might be deeply affected by an event while another individual suffers little or no ill effects.
- **Crisis intervention** is an immediate and short-term [psychological](#) care aimed at assisting individuals in a crisis situation in order to restore equilibrium to their bio-psycho-social functioning and to minimize the potential of long-term [psychological trauma](#).

Crisis situations can be in the form of natural disasters, severe physical injury, sudden death of a loved one, and specific emotional crises as a result of drastic transitions such as divorce, children leaving home, pregnancy, family and school violence.

Definitions

- “People are in a state of crisis when they face an obstacle to important life goals—and obstacle that is, for a time, insurmountable by the use of customary methods of problem-solving.” (Caplan, 1961)
- “...an upset in equilibrium at the failure of one’s traditional problem-solving approach which results in disorganization, hopelessness, sadness, confusion, and panic.” (Lillibridge and Klukken, 1978)
- “...crisis is a perception or experience of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds the person’s current resources and coping mechanisms.” (James and Gilliland, 2001)

Signs of Crisis

- Counselors are encouraged to be aware of the typical responses of those who have experienced a crisis or are currently struggling with a trauma. On the cognitive level, they may blame themselves or others for the trauma. Often, the person appears disoriented, becomes hypersensitive or confused, has poor concentration, uncertain, and poor troubleshooting capabilities.

- Physical responses to trauma include increased [heart rate](#), tremors, dizziness, [weakness](#), chills, headaches, [vomiting](#), shock, fainting, sweating, and fatigue. Among the common emotional responses of people who experience crisis in their lives include apathy, depression, [irritability](#), [anxiety](#), [panic](#), helplessness, hopelessness, [anger](#), [fear](#), [guilt](#), and denial. When assessing behavior, some typical responses to crisis are difficulty eating and/or sleeping, conflicts with others, withdrawal and lack of interest in social activities.

How to intervene??

- A comprehensive view of how to treat the trauma consists of ten stages outlined by Lerner and Shelton (2001). These 10 steps relate similar to the crisis intervention steps.
- The first step is to assess for danger/safety for self and others, this means for the victim, counselor, and others who may have been affected by the trauma.
- Then consider the physical and perceptual mechanisms of injury.
- Once injury is assessed the victim's level of responsiveness should be evaluated.
- If any medical needs are there, it should be addressed.
- The individual who witnessed or is experiencing a crisis, should be observed to identify their signs of traumatic stress.
- After the assessment of the situation is completed the counselor should introduce their self, state their title and role, and connect with the individual by building rapport.

- A good rapport building allows for a more fluid approach in grounding the individual, this can be done by allowing the client/person to tell their story.
- The interventionist provides support through active and empathetic listening.
- Normalize, validate, and educate the individuals emotions, stress and adaptive coping styles.
- Finally, the intervention specialist is to bring the person to the present, describe future events, and provide referrals as needed.
- After the crisis situation has been assessed and crisis interventions have been applied, the aim is at eliminating stress symptoms, thus treating the traumatic experience.

- Crisis intervention is focused on minimizing the stress of the event, providing emotional support and improving the individual's coping strategies in the here and now.
- Crisis counseling is intended to be quite brief, generally lasting for a period of no longer than a few weeks. It is important to note that crisis counseling is not [psychotherapy](#).

- Like psychotherapy, crisis counseling involves assessment, planning, and treatment, but the scope is generally much more specific. While psychotherapy focuses on a broad range of information and client history, crisis assessment and treatment focuses on the client's immediate situation including factors such as safety and providing immediate needs.

Thank you.