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# Crisis Intervention

## Session 3

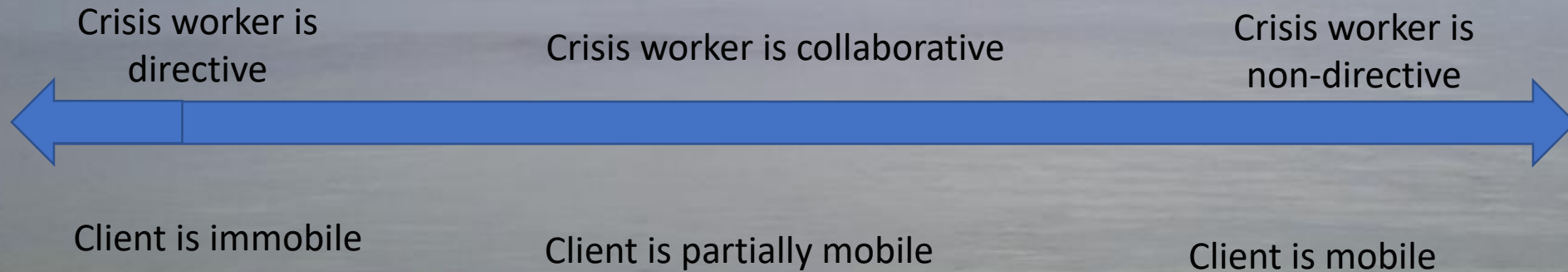
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# The Crisis Worker's Action Continuum

(James 2008)



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Threshold varies from client to client and depends on realistic assessment of the client's level of mobility/immobility



- All clients will present along a continuum of mobility
- The more immobilized a client is, the more directive the crisis worker will have to be
- Ideally, we want to work collaboratively with the client
- To determine our level of active engagement with the client, we need to be able to focus on a valid and realistic assessment of the client's mobility/immobility



# Open and Closed Ended Questions

To triage people in crisis, we need to differentiate between open-ended and closed-ended questions

## Closed-Ended Questions

- Used early on to obtain detailed information, rapid assessments
- ask for specific information that often elicit yes or no responses
- valuable in obtaining commitment to take action
- Avoid negative interrogatives

## Open-Ended Questions

- Fuller and more meaningful answers
- Request a description
- Focus on plans
- Stay away from “Why” questions
- A mix of open and closed questions is ideal



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# The ABCs of Triage Assessment

(Myer 2001; James, 2008)



Use a scale of 1—10 to rate Affective, Behavioral and Cognitive functioning

- ***Affective State*** -- often the first sign of disorganization and disequilibrium
- facilitate regaining emotional equilibrium by helping clients to express feelings in appropriate and realistic ways
- Caring, hope and empathic listening are central

# ABCs of Triage Assessment



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- ***Behavioral Functioning --***
- Active engagement appropriate to the situation, helps to combat the helplessness
- Help clients engage positive actions that can be taken at once
- Immobilized clients may not be able to initiate independent action though it is in their best interest
- Erratic, impulsive behavior = high risk

# ABCs of Triage Assessment



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- ***Cognitive Functioning --***
- How realistic and consistent is the client's thinking?
- Engaging in catastrophic thinking?
- Is the client rationalizing, exaggerating or believing part-truths or rumors?
- Is the client's thinking irrational? Rigid?
- Is dealing with the crisis exacerbating vulnerabilities of a client already struggling with mental health issues?





# Considerations for Working with Children in Crisis

- Much of how we relate to children in crisis is the same as relating to people in general
- But there are some important differences
- Children speak in the language of play and the metaphors of their imagination.
- Drawing and telling their stories should be primary

# Ensuring Safety with Children



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- Children depend on adults to keep them safe
- Emotion, imagination and fantasy play a much larger role in their mental functioning
- Talk with them about the situation in an age appropriate manner
- Little children need simple explanations with concepts that are familiar
- Stay alert for the possibility of irrational guilt
- Give them things they can actively do to combat helpless and out of control feelings

# Listening with Children



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- Listening is especially important in work with children
- Listen and provide support metaphorically, symbolically, and physically
- Listen for and inquire about the feelings children are having
- Children may need an adult to witness their experience, to give them permission to feel what they are feeling
- Talk to children directly about what is going on instead of allowing them to get their information primarily from TV or media outlets
- Model healthy coping skills

# Actions to Take with Children in Crisis



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- Model healthy coping skills
- Process your own issues privately so you have the resources to be there for the children, but
- Don't feel like you need to hide signs of distress all the time
- Help children to return to their normal routines as quickly as possible
- Children need time and opportunity to tell their stories and often the understanding of their caretakers to process the fears, fantasies and losses they may have endured in the crisis.
- Make time for play -- play builds strength and resilience

## Bibliography (全课程) 参考文献



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