

Suicide and Crisis Incidents: Tips and Takeaways

- Meet the person in crisis where they are at:
 - Speak in a neutral tone (no raising pitch in your voice, making voices, joking, random remarks, etc)
 - The person is experiencing intense emotions, so creating a personal understanding of where they are at mentally and how you should place yourself in this event is important
- Vocabulary
 - STRAY far from vocabulary that minimizes the individual who is in crisis or is experiencing suicidal ideation
 - DON'T USE PHRASES LIKE:
 - “I have to”,
 - “Required questions”
 - “Mandated”
 - “The school makes me”
 - INSTEAD USE:
 - “I care about your safety, so I want to ask you some questions so I can better help you”
 - “Your safety is a priority of mine....”
 - “Your safety is important to me”
 - Using vocabulary that indicates that you care about them and aren't “required” to show up and ask questions.
 - People in crisis or who are experiencing SI are experiencing such intense emotions, showing them that

you care is important because no one else may be showing them that care.

- People experiencing SI or are in crisis are experiencing deep feelings of isolation.
 - Make sure you showcase empathy, ***not*** sympathy
 - The use of sympathy, “I’ve been through something like that before..”, or “Yeah, that sucks, my mother has done the same thing” creates the feeling their experience doesn’t matter or isn’t important
- Ensure you do ***not*** make this about you, meaning:
 - Don’t share personal experiences
 - Don’t relate back to you
- Don’t beat around the bush
 - When asking the safety assessment questions, be direct and calm with your delivery
- Active Listening
 - Make eye contact with the person in crisis or experiencing SI; showing you are present in the situation and are focused
 - Nod your head if someone is opening up to you
- Try to not say “Thank you”
 - Thank you can feel like the conversation is being brought back to you, minimizing that person’s emotions
 - Say, “I appreciate”, “I’m grateful”
 - EX. “I appreciate you being willing to share that with me, it takes a lot of strength.”
- Label an emotion

- Adhering an emotion/feeling to the scenario allows the person in crisis to know that you are rowing the same boat as them.
 - Ex. “I hear how isolating and minimizing it is when your mother brushes you off and doesn’t listen to you”
- Reflection
 - While taking part of an incident, reflect back what the person in crisis is expressing
 - This allows the person in crisis to understand that you are listening and comprehend what they are saying to you
 - Ex. “It sounds like you are so overwhelmed with your boyfriend because he didn’t help clean up the apartment tonight. Is that right?”
 - Ex. “I hear how scary and intense that is. Having your dad boil up and flip the table really creates such intense emotions.
- Take care of yourself afterwards!!
 - Some incidents can be intense and can create a lot of emotions
 - Make sure you spend time for yourself afterwards or seek support if need be