Love in the Chaos: Responding to Crisis with Compassion and Skill

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Learning Objectives:

Understand	Understand the impact of trauma, psychosis, and substance-related brain-based issues on behavior and crisis situations to inform effective response strategies.
Learn and apply	Learn and apply de-escalation techniques from a range of best practices to manage challenging situations with empathy and care.
Develop	Develop practical skills for trauma-informed crisis response that promote safety, connection, and resolution for individuals experiencing behavioral health crises.

Trauma Informed Care Defined

By Juliana Wallace

Trauma-Informed Care is an organizational framework and approach that is not only used in staff-client interactions but in all aspects, including how the organization interacts with staff and the community. TIC is grounded in the strengths of individuals, systems, and communities, and strives to understand and support safety for everyone, both physically and emotionally. It involves a commitment to stopping and examining the "way things are done" in order to seek out the systemic nature of oppression, and trying out a new way of doing things by listening to the voices of those involved.

Trauma Informed Care: Foundational Elements

Defining trauma ~ Including historical trauma, collective trauma, toxic stress, and intergenerational trauma.

Understanding and Applying the 6 principles ~ Safety, Trustworthiness & Transparency, Peer Support, Collaboration and Mutuality, Empowerment, Voice & Choice, and Cultural, Historical and Gender Issues.

NEAR Science ~ Neurobiology: Trauma and the Brain, **E**pidemiology **A**dverse Childhood Events Study, **R**esiliency

Workforce Wellness ~ moral injury, compassion satisfaction, vicarious wellness and vicarious trauma, and burn out

Organizational Culture Change ~ Implementation through policy and practice

Neurobiology: Stress, Trauma, & Crisis

Brain structures involved:

Prefrontal Cortex

Rational thinking, planning, decision making, sense-making, "Calming center"

Amygdala

Considers sensory information for real or perceived danger ("fight or flight activator")

Thalamus

Incoming sensory information and motor functions

Hippocampus

Memory formation, checks memories for context, "hub for memory and learning"

Neurobiology of Substance Use, Understanding the impact of Methamphetamine

- Studies range showing 10-60% of people using methamphetamine have clinically significant symptoms of psychosis
- Looks similar to Schizophrenia
- Impacting brain functions:

- Pathways that control expression and direction of behavior to predictable stimuli or rewards
- Pathways that influence reward processing, effort, and translation of emotions into actions
- Pathways involved in cognitive functioning, specifically memory

Hsieh JH, Stein DJ, Howells FM. The neurobiology of methamphetamine induced psychosis. Front Hum Neurosci. 2014 Jul 22;8:537. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2014.00537. PMID: 25100979; PMCID: PMC4105632.

What is De-escalation?

A variety of psychosocial techniques aimed at reducing violent and/or disruptive behavior (Nice, 2005).

Techniques are not prescriptive:

Causes of violence are multi-factorial and unique to each situation

Research is limited, non-scientific, lacks specific techniques (Richmond et al., 2011)

De-escalation starts with us:

We need to be neutral before we engage others.

Internal Checklist:
Working with escalated people

♡ Positive regard for the person ♡

Capacity to be empathetic

Empathy: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another (Oxford Dictionary)

To engage in empathy we must recall or reflect on feelings that may be difficult

Understand that the person is doing the best they can under the circumstances

Levels of Behavioral Escalation

Anxiety

Feeling subjectively threatened

Interventions:

- Empathy,
- Support,
- Active problem solving,
- Active listening

Anger

Serves to protect from feeling unsafe. Promotes a sense of power.

Interventions:

- Acknowledge,
- Provide choices,
- Agenda-less listening

Hostility

Anger with a focus

Interventions:

- Short, clear messages,
- Neutral stance,
- Matter-of-fact tone and call for help,
- State your goal of keeping all people safe

Aggression

A total loss of control with results in physical acting out

Interventions:

- Withdraw and call for help

Trauma Scripting

Validating or normalizing conveys that you understand what else could be going on for someone.

Being clear and direct is important for a stressed brain. Complete information helps avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Providing the "why" helps establish a sense of consistency and predictability.

Providing options and choice helps empower and create hope.

https://traumainformedoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Anatomy-of-a-Trauma-Informed-Script-TIP-Sheet.pdf

Active Listening Strategies

Give regular feedback:

Physical

Face the person; eye contact (intermittent is okay); head nodding; focused attention

Paraphrase

What I heard is that you are... Do I have that right?

Reflect

You seem...; It sounds like...

Clarify

May I ask a few questions?

Encourage

Really? Can you tell me more...?

Validate

I truly appreciate your willingness to talk to me

http://www.usip.org/about-us/global-peacebuilding-center

Collaborative Problem-Solving

An approach to finding solutions that involves bringing together different perspectives and expertise to tackle complex challenges

Increased Innovation

Collaborative problem-solving allows for a wider range of ideas and perspectives to be brought to the table, leading to more creative and innovative solutions.

More Effective Decision-Making

Improved Communication

Increased Ownership

Enhanced Relationships

Pollastri, A. R., Epstein, L. D., Heath, G. H., & Ablon, J. S. (2013). The collaborative problem solving approach: Outcomes across settings. Harvard Review of Psychiatry, 21(4), 188-199.

Collaborative Problem-Solving

An approach to finding solutions that involves bringing together different perspectives and expertise to tackle complex challenges

Increased Innovation

More Effective Decision-Making

Improved Communication

Collaborative problem-solving requires active listening and clear communication, leading to better understanding and fewer misunderstandings.

Increased Ownership

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Collaborative Problem-Solving

An approach to finding solutions that involves bringing together different perspectives and expertise to tackle complex challenges

Increased Innovation

More Effective Decision-Making

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Increased Ownership

When stakeholders are involved in problem-solving, they have a greater sense of ownership over the solutions and are more likely to be invested in their success.

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Verbal De-Escalation:

Learning from BETA Project

01

Verbal Engagement

Establishing verbal engagement is crucial in trauma-informed care. This involves actively listening and respectfully communicating with individuals. It is important to create a safe space for open dialogue and ensure that communication is non-confrontational.

02

Collaborative Relationship Established

Building a collaborative relationship is fundamental in trauma-informed care. It entails treating individuals with respect, recognizing their autonomy, and involving them in decision-making processes. This approach helps restore a sense of control and trust, which can be particularly valuable for

03

De-Escalated out of Agitation

De-escalation techniques are vital in managing agitation associated with extreme states, specifically drawing on best practices in acute psychiatric settings.

The following ten domains of de-escalation, adapted for non-clinical settings, can be applied.

Holloman Jr, G. H., & Zeller, S. L. (2012). Overview of Project BETA: best practices in evaluation and treatment of agitation. Western Journal of Emergency Medicine, 13(1), 1.

Verbal De-Escalation:

Learning from BETA Project

1. Respect Personal Space
   Maintain appropriate physical distance, considering the potential trauma-related reasons for valuing personal space and protecting belongings.
2. Avoid Provoking Behaviors
3. Establish Verbal Contact
4. Be Concise
5. Identify Wants and Feelings
6. Active Listening
7. Agree or Agree to Disagree
8. Establish Clear Boundaries & Limits
9. Offer Choices and Optimism
10. Debrief with All Involved

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Verbal De-Escalation:

Learning from BETA Project

1. Respect Personal Space
2. Avoid Provoking Behaviors

   Be self-aware and mindful of non-verbal communication to avoid triggering or escalating distress.
3. Establish Verbal Contact
4. Be Concise
5. Identify Wants and Feelings
6. Active Listening
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Verbal De-Escalation:

Learning from BETA Project

1. Respect Personal Space
2. Avoid Provoking Behaviors
3. Establish Verbal Contact
   Designate one main communicator: establish connection, ask how individuals prefer to be addressed, introduce yourself, and communicate intentions clearly.
4. Be Concise
5. Identify Wants and Feelings
6. Active Listening
7. Agree or Agree to Disagree
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Verbal De-Escalation:

Learning from BETA Project

1. Respect Personal Space
2. Avoid Provoking Behaviors
3. Establish Verbal Contact
4. Be Concise

   Use simple, short statements that allow individuals time to process information effectively.
5. Identify Wants and Feelings
6. Active Listening
7. Agree or Agree to Disagree
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Verbal De-Escalation:

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1. Respect Personal Space
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3. Establish Verbal Contact
4. Be Concise
5. Identify Wants and Feelings

   Help individuals express their needs and emotions, and validate their experiences by actively listening and acknowledging their perspectives.
6. Active Listening
7. Agree or Agree to Disagree
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5. Identify Wants and Feelings
6. Active Listening
7. Agree or Agree to Disagree

   Practice empathy by assuming that what others are saying is true and attempt to understand their perspective, even if you disagree.
8. Establish Clear Boundaries & Limits
9. Offer Choices and Optimism
10. Debrief with All Involved

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5. Identify Wants and Feelings
6. Active Listening
7. Agree or Agree to Disagree
8. Establish Clear Boundaries & Limits

   Clearly communicate boundaries and expectations to ensure a safe and structured environment.
9. Offer Choices and Optimism
10. Debrief with All Involved

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5. Identify Wants and Feelings
6. Active Listening
7. Agree or Agree to Disagree
8. Establish Clear Boundaries & Limits
9. Offer Choices and Optimism

   Provide individuals with options when appropriate, empowering them to make decisions and promoting a sense of hope and optimism.
10. Debrief with All Involved

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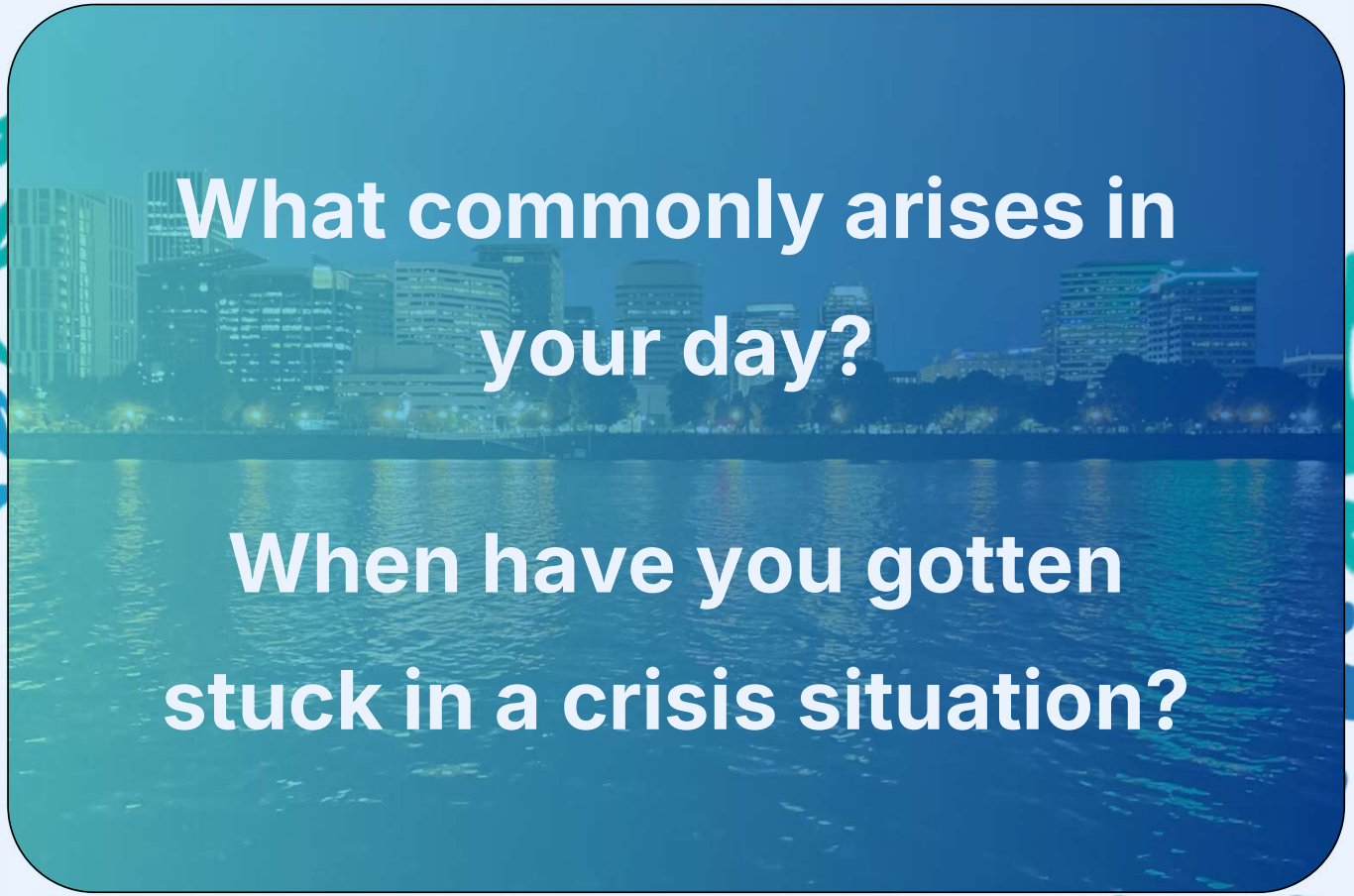
10. Debrief with All Involved

Engage in post-incident discussions with all relevant parties to reflect, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and ensure ongoing support.

Wilkerson Jr, G. H., & Zeller, S. L. (2012). Overview of Project BETA: best practices in evaluation and treatment of agitation. Western Journal of Emergency Medicine, 13(1), 1.

Scenarios


What commonly arises in your day?
When have you gotten stuck in a crisis situation?

Know your limits and the limits

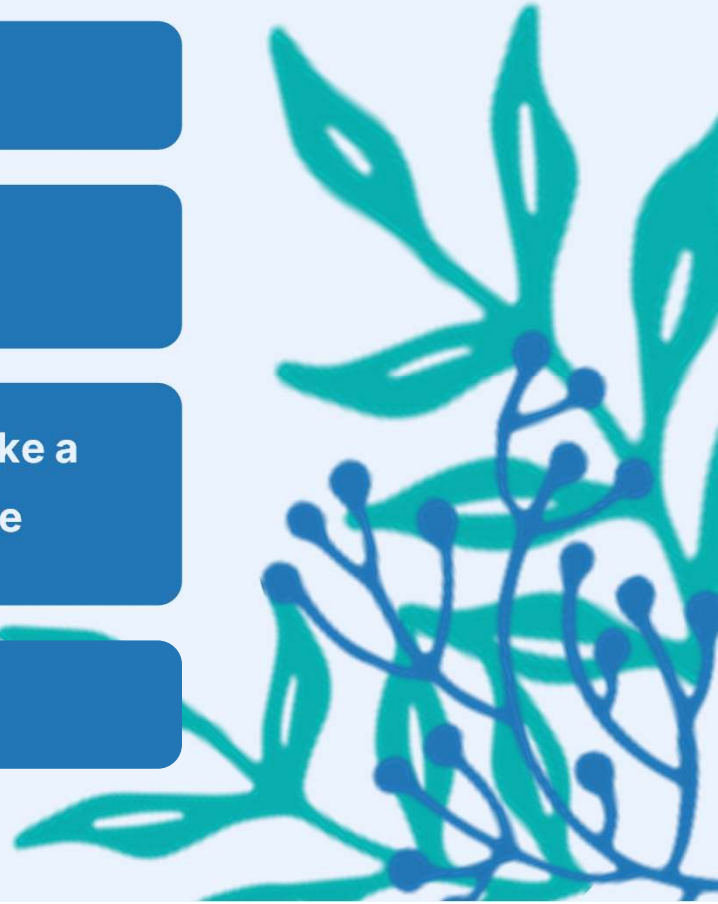
The art of doing (and saying) nothing

Using silence and time as a skill intervention

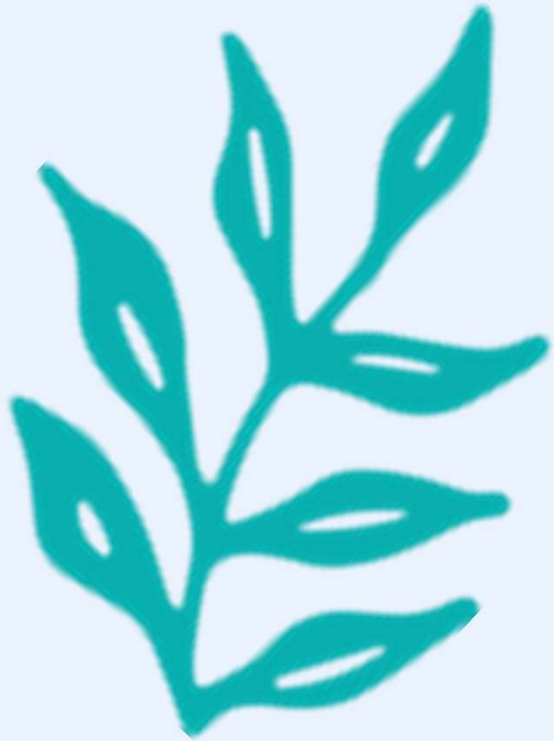
Allowing for people to have time for processing verbal information

Recall a time you were feeling high stress and needed to make a decision. We can often need a few minutes to think about the choices we have and consequences of those choices.

Do you find that silence in conflict can be stressful for you?



Boundaries: Why and How?

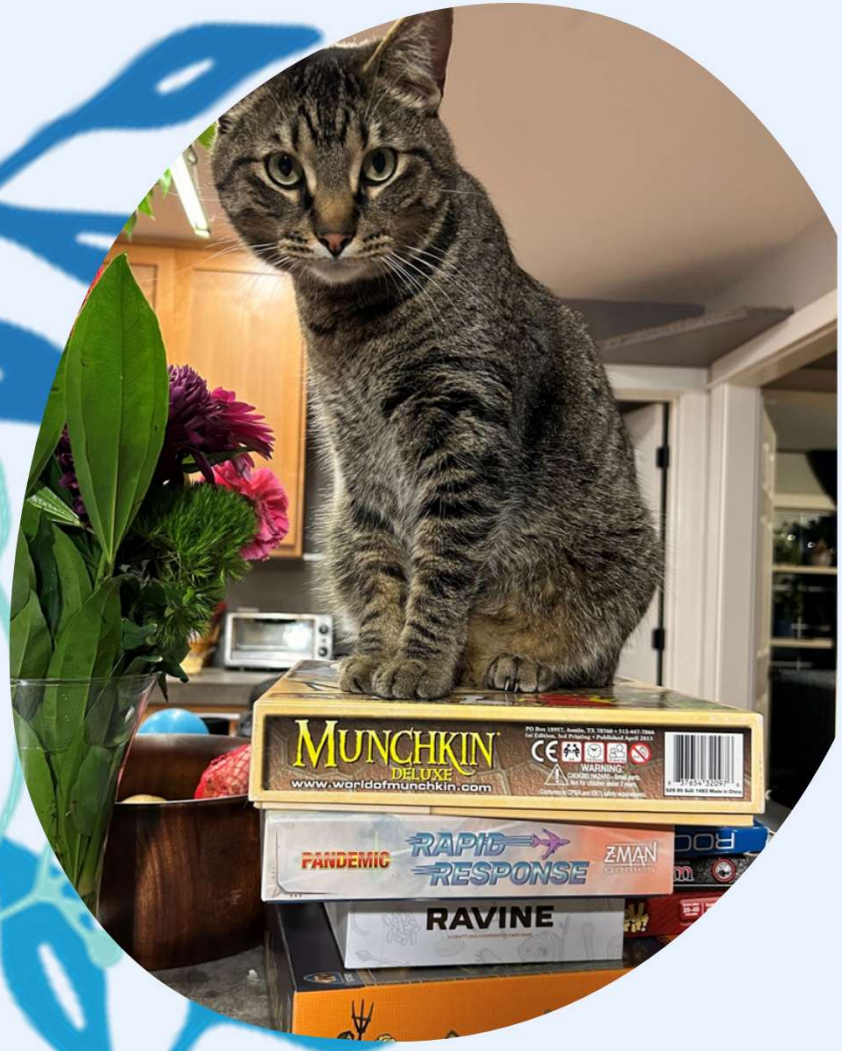


Setting boundaries is healthy!

We all do it differently:
Just practice!

Set expectations early and often

Practice your simple and direct statement about what your role is and what boundaries you have.



We are working with traumatized folks, in a traumatized system.

We are often the deliverer of information from a broken or under-resourced system.

How do we build reflective practices to share the joy and growth from the work we do?

Science and Neurobiology of Resilience

Research indicates that a neurotransmitter who's job it is to regulate stress responses in animals, and studies in humans support the possibility that it may represent a protective factor in the face of stress (Scott, 2012).

- **Hormones**
- **Genetics**
- **Stress over our lifetime can impact the development of resilience**