CRISIS INTERVENTION

The Chinese character for "Crisis" is a composite of two others:

Danger  **Opportunity**

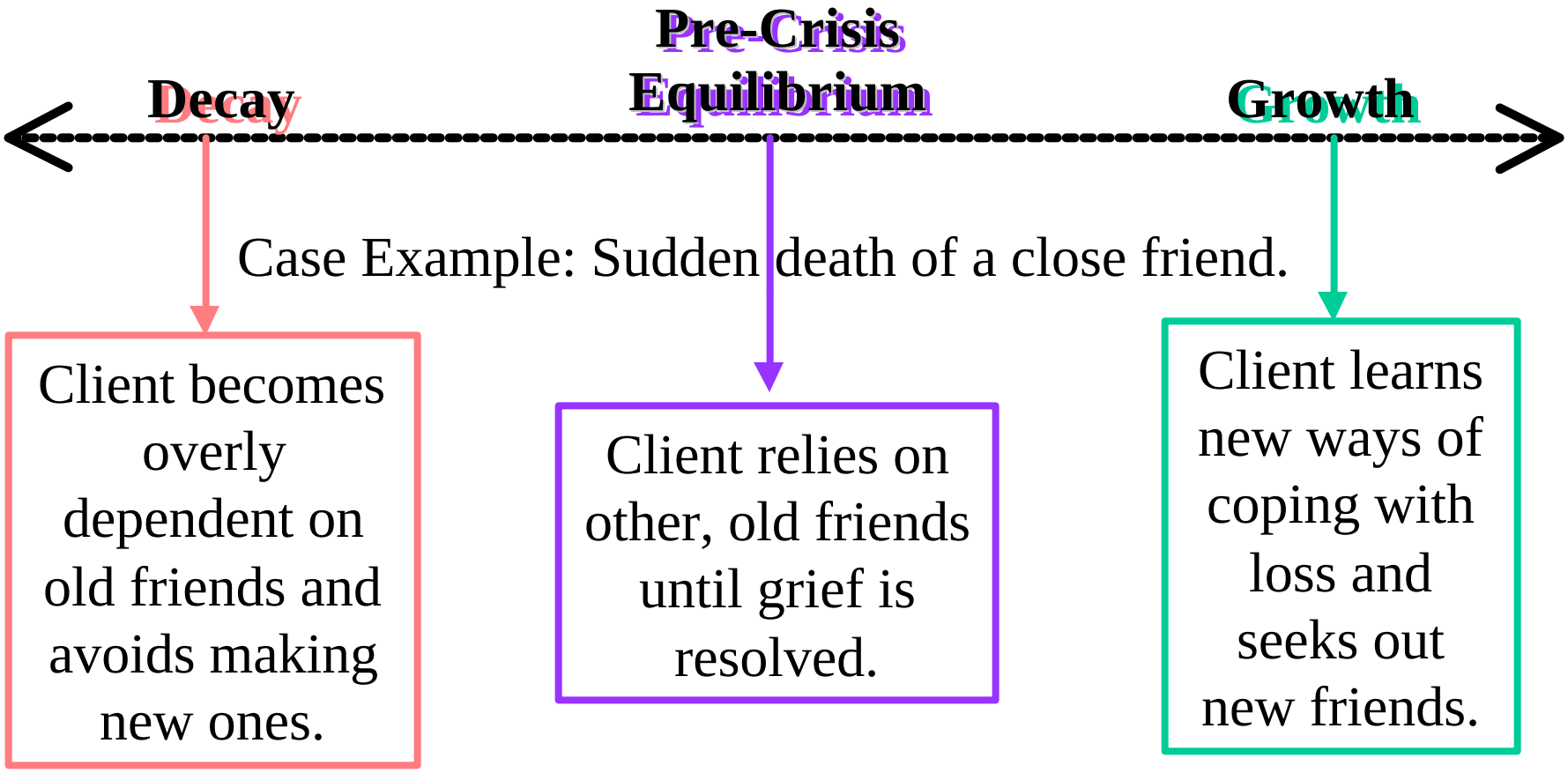
Crisis Intervention - A double edged sword.

Plausible Resolutions

- Debilitation
- Deterioration
- Lower Functioning

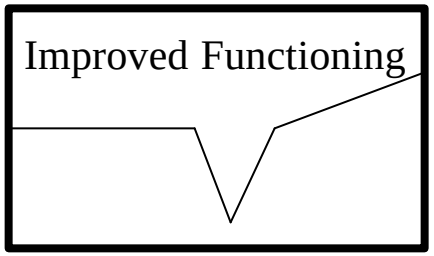
- Growth
- Higher Functioning
- Transcendence

Resolution Continuum

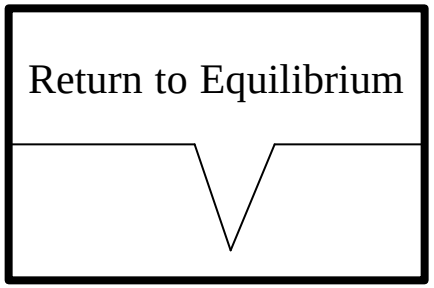


CRISIS INTERVENTION

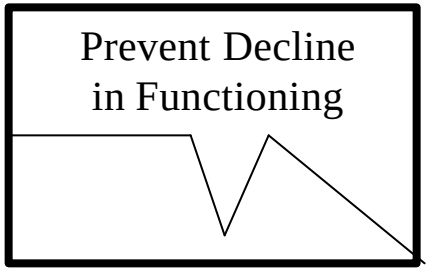
The BASIC GOALS of Crisis Intervention



Sometimes our efforts produce more optimal levels of personal and interpersonal functioning for the client!



At a bare minimum our efforts should return the client to his/her pre-crisis level of personal and interpersonal functioning!



At all costs our efforts should prevent our clients from settling for a lower level of personal and interpersonal functioning!

Global Strategy - "OFFER HOPE"



Because clients in active crisis often feel despair, hopelessness and apathetic about their life circumstances...



a worker should approach the client with a positive, optimistic attitude!

CAVEAT:

"Offer hope" but <u>NEVER</u> "make promises"



A worker should not promise the client that the distressful circumstances will definitely improve, even though that may be what the client wants to hear. The worker can not offer any guarantees but instead should offer support and encouragement that change is possible if the client tries.

CAVEAT:

"When the worker feels the situation is hopeless"



"Offering hope" and conveying optimistic expectations is a powerful, healing strategy that has been documented in practice research. Positive expectancy is so important that a worker who feels that there is no hope for a client should probably help the client find another helping professional.

Intervention Strategies: Aimed at Individuals and Families

A. Stay event focused - especially on recent life events.

B. Promote catharsis or ventilation if it is not already occurring.

C. Reconnect or mobilize client's natural support system.

D. Get client coping again and working on some immediate task.

Stay event focused - especially on recent life events.

- Help the client locate the precipitant - the last event to happen before active crisis
  - "Have there been any sudden changes in your life these past few days?"
  - "Why did you decide to come in now and seek help?"
- Don't explore old events or wounds that may have been reactivated by the present crisis state

Promote catharsis or ventilation if it is not already occurring.

- Some clients in active crisis may already be extremely upset and will not need any encouragement to express how they are feeling.
- Some clients in active crisis may seem frozen, numb, and expressionless, and they will need encouragement to address underlying affect.
  - "Tell me where you were when you found out about the bad news?"
  - "How did you feel or react when you found out?"

Reconnect or mobilize client's natural support system

- Clients in active crisis often withdraw from significant others, so they need to be encouraged to reach out to family and friends.
  - "Do you have someone that you can contact who will be supportive right now?"
  - "Do you have any family members or close friends that we can call right now who will come and get you?"

Get client coping again and working on some immediate task

- Encourage client to begin doing anything that is responsible that will help them to start coping with the immediate events.
  - "Why not make a list of things that need to be done right now!"
  - "Why don't you start working on things that can be done quickly. That may help you feel much better!"
  - "What do you want to do next?"



CRISIS INTERVENTION

Intervention Strategies: Aimed at Community/Organizational Disasters

In large scale disasters like floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, or tornadoes and in organizational tragedies like school shootings, terrorist bombings, plane crashes, ship wrecks, etc. group oriented interventions are called into play to help the survivors, relatives, and first responders (rescue workers) cope with the trauma of these tragedies.

CISM: Critical Incident Stress Management

Group Oriented Mental Health Teams

- Demobilization - immediately after exposure to disaster (10-20 minutes long)
- Defusings - 8-12 hrs after disaster (20-45 minutes long)
- Debriefings - 24-72 hours after disaster (2-3 hours long)

CISM: Critical Incident Stress Management

Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Teams

A. Hundreds of teams exist throughout the USA in counties, cities, states, and even at the national level.
B. CISD teams also exist at the international level and usually operate under the auspices of the International Red Cross, Red Crescent, the United Nations etc.









CISM: Critical Incident Stress Management

Group Oriented Mental Health Teams

For more detailed information about Critical Incident Stress Management see:

http://www.emedicine.com/emerg/topic826.htm

SUMMARY

- The resolution of crisis follows a continuum from decay, to a pre-crisis equilibrium, and finally, growth.
- Our 3 goals in **Crisis Intervention** should be the client's Improved Functioning, a Return to Equilibrium, and to Prevent a Decline in Functioning.

  Remember: *Offer hope, but never make promises*!



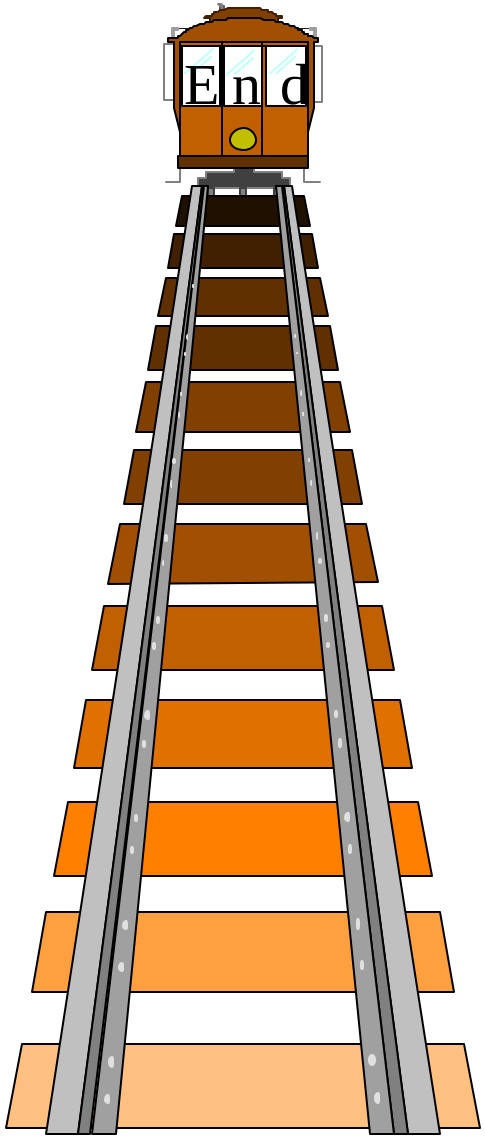
- **Crisis Intervention** Strategies:

  A. Stay event focused - especially on recent life events.

  B. Promote catharsis or ventilation if it is not already occurring.

  C. Reconnect or mobilize client's natural support system.

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