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We are here to **LISTEN**;  
not to work miracles.

We are here to **HELP** people **DISCOVER** what they are **FEELING**;  
not to make the feelings go away.

We are here to **HELP** people **IDENTIFY** their **OPTIONS**;  
not to decide for them what they should do.

We are here to **DISCUSS STEPS** with people;  
not to take the steps for them.

We are here to **HELP** people **DISCOVER** their own strength;  
not to rescue them and leave them still vulnerable.

We are here to **HELP** people **DISCOVER** they can **HELP** themselves;  
not to take responsibility for them.

We are here to **HELP PEOPLE LEARN TO CHOOSE**;  
not to make it unnecessary for them to make difficult choices.

**WE ARE HERE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR CHANGE.**

## A Good Volunteer Needs...

### A Calm Nature

We must remain calm in crisis situations. We must not "enter into" the crisis". Our voice tone, quality, speed and inflection must all reflect confidence and reassurance.

### A Non-Judgmental Attitude

We must demonstrate respect for clients by accepting the client's right to maintain their own standards. Although we might not choose the same options in our own personal lives, we must not impose our values and morals on the client.

### Self-Confidence

To be effective, a person must see himself as effective. Our self-confidence as a volunteer will increase in proportion to the training, skill development and positive experience we gain through hard work and preparation.

### Sincere Concern and Ability to Empathize

A crisis line volunteer's primary motivation is a sincere concern for people. This position is not a place to work out personal problems. We must focus on the needs of the client.

### Patience

Clients are sometimes unable to follow-up immediately, or they may have difficulty explaining their situation in a concise manner and/or expressing their feelings in words. We must wait patiently and not push the client or put words in their mouths.

### Common Sense

Clients are often plagued by unrealistic expectations, poorly established goals and the belief that the answer to their problems is in someone or something else. We must apply common sense to the situation, *helping* the client to establish goals and plans for solving problems.

## Safety Tips

Never tell a client:

Your full name  
Your home address  
Home phone number  
Where you work  
Where you go to school  
Your schedule for working at the Office for Women  
Or  
Any other personal or identifying information

Never offer to:

Give a client a ride in your car  
*You can problem solve with them to identify safe transportation*

Let the client stay at your home  
*You can problem solve with them to identify safe shelter*

Provide child care  
*You can problem solve with them to identify safe child care*

Lend the client \$\$\$  
*You can problem solve with them to identify other resources or agencies that may be able to help them*

### **Trust Your Instincts !!!**

If you feel apprehensive or afraid about a situation or individual, tell your supervisor or call the police.

# When The Telephone Rings

## What is a Crisis?

- ⇒ A crisis occurs when a person cannot use customary coping skills to get immediate relief from a stressful situation.
- ⇒ A crisis can be situational or developmental.
- ⇒ A crisis is time-limited...it pushes toward some kind of resolution
- ⇒ A crisis is defined by the person in crisis...it is personal.
- ⇒ A crisis can be experienced by anyone.
- ⇒ During a crisis, habits and coping patterns are often suspended and the person is especially open to learning new methods of coping.
- ⇒ A person in crisis can experience multiple feelings: fear, anger, hopelessness, depression, tension, confusion, irrationality, isolation and anxiety.

## Crisis Intervention

A short-term helping process which focuses on resolution of the immediate problem through the use of personal, social and environmental supports or resources.

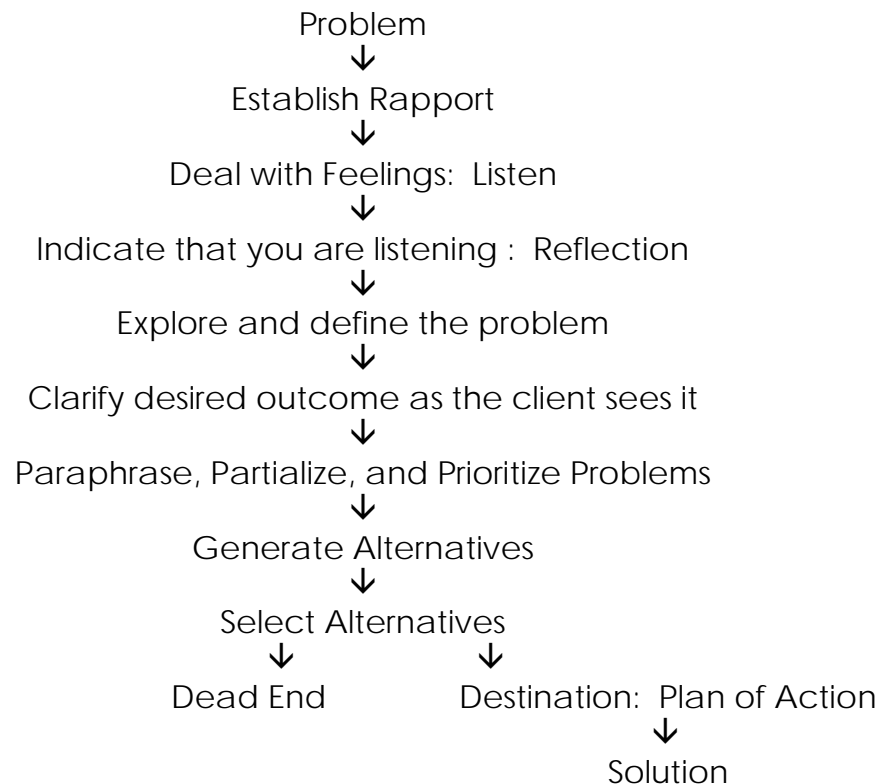
### Effective Crisis Intervention

- 📖 Deals with problems HERE and NOW.
- 📖 Helps the client bring about positive outcomes to the immediate situation
- 📖 Partializes the problem...helps the person break down the overwhelming problem into manageable pieces.
- 📖 Can provide the client with NEW and IMPROVED coping skills.
- 📖 Raises the client's self-esteem.

### Five Steps of Crisis Intervention

1. Establish Rapport
2. Explore Feelings
3. Define the Problem
4. Generate and explore alternative
5. Develop a plan of action

### Road Map to Crisis Intervention



## Establishing Rapport

### Answering the phone

Pleasant tone of voice

Avoidance of clichés and inappropriate (too social or too business-like) mannerism

Listening to yourself as well as the client

### Establishing Relationship and helping callers talk productively

- ✓ Ability to convey interest and warmth:
  - to help the caller trust the counselor and risk talking about their problems
  - to empathize with people in varied circumstances
- ✓ Sensitivity to feelings not directly expressed:
  - hearing the underlying emotions as well as the words
- ✓ Ability to respond spontaneously to another human being, yet be objective:
  - to give feedback to the caller
  - to be confrontive in a non-punitive manner when appropriate

## Communication Techniques

### General to Specific

Clients often are overwhelmed. We must help clients to make specific, rather than general statements. Try to alleviate the feeling of being overwhelmed: break down the whole problem into manageable parts.

The Client Says:

"Nothing in my life is working."

We Can Say:

"What things in your life are not working?"

and/or

"which situation causes you the most distress?"

"Everyone is out to get me."

"Who do you believe is out to get you?"

and/or

"What do you mean 'out to get' you?"

"No one cares about me."

"There are agencies that might be able to help you."

### Build Trust

Avoid asking "Why" questions. To ask why automatically makes the client feel responsible.

Instead of:

"Why do you stay with him?"

Say:

"Tell me what positive things you get out of the relationship."

## Active listening

Listen...allow silence...listen. Be warm empathic and genuine.

Positive reinforcement:

It was very brave of you to call.  
It takes a lot of courage to ask for help.  
That must have been very difficult for you.

Allow the client to express her fears, anger and frustration. She may have suppressed such feelings for a long time. Validate her feelings.

## Honest reassurance

Reassure the client, but do not promise things you cannot be sure will happen. We cannot make her life OK, but we can help her to understand her options and support her in making positive changes in her life.

## Clarify/Confront inconsistencies Gently

Ask for clarification such as:

"What do you mean by ....."  
"When did you first notice ...."

When confronting inconsistencies here are some examples:

"Earlier in our conversation, you said he was violent only when he drank, but you've named three other violent episodes that did not include drinking."

"You said earlier that the children were not involved but then stated they were having trouble in school."

Or they may, through their language accept the responsibility for their partner's actions.

They may say: "He choked me."  
We should say: "It sounds as if he strangled you."

They may say: "He hit me because I made him angry"  
We should say: "He hit you because he was angry."

## Referrals

When you are offering referrals, ask the client to get a pencil and write down what you are sharing. People in crisis cannot remember details.

## Do Not Give Advice

We clarify. We give information. We help to identify options. We do not give advice.

If the client asks:

“What would you do if you were in my place?”

Respond:

“Let’s look at YOUR options.”

If the client asks:

“Should I file for divorce?”

Respond:

“Sounds like you need more time to be comfortable with that decision. You may want to consider staying separated until you know for sure what you want to do. Make a list and write down the pros and cons.”

**Office for Women  
Intake Form**

Staff: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: begin \_\_\_\_\_ end \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Walk-in \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Client Information:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Sex: Female \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Safe Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Perpetrator Information:  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Sex: Female \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to the Client \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Client's Children

Name	Sex	Age	In common
_____			
_____			
_____			

Evidence of Abuse Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Referral Source

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Client \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Incident Report** (Mark type of abuse)

Verbal abuse/Threats \_\_\_ Shove/Slap \_\_\_ Punch/Kick \_\_\_ Forced Sex \_\_\_  
Threat with Weapon \_\_\_ Weapon Involved \_\_\_ Isolation/Nonsupport \_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of latest incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address where abuse occurred: \_\_\_\_\_  
Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Previously abused?  Police called?  Arrest made?  Weapon in home?   
Medical Attention?  Drug/alcohol Involved?  By whom \_\_\_\_\_

**Referrals Provided** (circle all that apply)

Counseling                  Financial                  Legal                  Medical                  Other

## PERSONALIZED SAFETY PLAN

The following steps represent my plan for increasing my safety and preparing in advance for the possibility for further violence. Although I do not have control over my partner's violence, I do have a choice about how to respond to him/her and how to best get myself and my children to safety.

### STEP 1: Safety during an explosive incident.

- A. If we are going to have an argument, I can try to have us discuss it in \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. (Try to avoid arguments in the bathroom, garage, kitchens, near weapons or in rooms without access to the front door.)
- B. If it's not safe to stay, I can \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Practice how to get out safely. What doors, windows, elevators or stairwells would you use?)
- C. I can have my bag and car keys ready and keep them \_\_\_\_\_  
in order to leave quickly.
- D. I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ about the violence and request that they call  
the police if they hear suspicious noises coming from my house.
- E. I can use \_\_\_\_\_ as my code word with my children and my  
friends so they can call for help.
- F. I can teach my children how to use the telephone to contact the police and the  
fire department.
- G. If I have to leave my home, I can go \_\_\_\_\_. (Decide  
this even if you don't think there will be a next time.)

\*\*\* Use your judgment. If the situation is very serious, give him/her what he/she wants to calm him/her down. You have to protect yourself and your children until you are out of danger.

\*\*\* Always remember – YOU DESERVE BETTER THAN THIS!!!

### STEP 2: Safety when preparing to leave.

- A. I can leave money / an extra set of keys / copies of important documents / some  
extra clothes with \_\_\_\_\_ so I can leave quickly.
- B. I can open a savings account by \_\_\_\_\_ to increase my  
independence.
- C. I can also begin to \_\_\_\_\_ as a way of  
increasing my independence.
- E. The Office for Women's phone number is \_\_\_\_\_. I can keep  
\_\_\_\_\_(for phone calls) with me at all times.

- F. I can check with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to see who would be able to let me stay with them or lend me some money.
  - G. I can sit down and review my safety plan every \_\_\_\_\_ in order to plan the safest way to leave the residence.
  - H. I can rehearse my escape plan and, as appropriate, practice it with my children.
- \*\*\* Remember – If you tell your partner that you’ll leave if he/she ever hits you again, think about whether you’re giving him/her permission to hit you “just one more time.”

**STEP 3:** Safety in my own residence.

- A. If my partner no longer lives with me, I can take action to ensure my and my children’s safety in my home. I can change the locks on my doors as soon as possible.
- B. I can buy \_\_\_\_\_ to secure my windows.
- C. I can teach my children to \_\_\_\_\_ when I am not available.
- D. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_ about who has permission to pick up my children.
- E. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_ that my partner no longer resides with me and that they should call the police if he / she is observed near my residence.
- F. I can install an outside lighting system that lights up when a person is coming close to my home.
- G. I can purchase rope ladders to be used for escape from 2<sup>nd</sup> floor windows.

**STEP 4:** Safety with a protective order.

- A. I will keep my protective order \_\_\_\_\_. (Always keep it on your person. If you change bags, that is the 1<sup>st</sup> thing that should go in it.)
- B. If my partner breaks the protective order, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. If the police are not responsive, I can \_\_\_\_\_.

**STEP 5:** Safety going to and at work.

- A. I can inform \_\_\_\_\_ at work of my situation.
- B. I can \_\_\_\_\_ to help screen my calls at work.
- C. When leaving work, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. If problems occur while I am driving home, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- E. If I use public transportation, I can \_\_\_\_\_.

**STEP 6:** Safety and my emotional health.

- A. If I feel down and ready to return to a potentially abusive situation, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. When I have to communicate with my ex-partner, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. I will try to use positive self-talk with myself and be assertive with others. I can tell myself that \_\_\_\_\_ whenever I feel others are trying to control or abuse me.
- D. I can read \_\_\_\_\_ to help me feel stronger.
- E. I can call \_\_\_\_\_ as additional sources of support to me.
- F. I can attend a Support group to gain support from other women, and learn more about myself and the relationship.

**STEP 7:** Safety and drug or alcohol consumption.

\*\*\* The use of any alcohol or other drugs can reduce a woman's awareness and ability to act quickly to protect herself from her battering partner. Furthermore, the batterer's use of alcohol or other drugs may give him/her an excuse to use violence. Therefore, in the context of alcohol or other drug consumption, a woman needs to make specific safety plans.

\*\*\* If drug or alcohol consumption has occurred in my relationship with my abusive partner, I can enhance my safety in these ways:

- A. If I am going to consume alcohol or other drugs, I can do so in a safe place and with people who understand the risk of violence and are committed to my safety.
- B. I can also \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.
- C. If my partner is consuming, I can \_\_\_\_\_.
- D. To protect my children, I might \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

\*\*\* The legal repercussions of using illegal drugs can be very hard on a battered woman, may hurt her relationship with her children, and put her at a disadvantage in other legal actions related to her battering partner. Therefore, women should carefully consider the potential cost of the use of illegal drugs.

## WHAT I NEED TO TAKE WHEN I LEAVE

Identification for myself

Driver's License

Children's Birth Certificates

My Birth Certificate

Money

Pink Slip – if I have a car

Lease, Rental Agreement, House Deed,

Mortgage Payment book

Bank books

Check books

Credit cards

Insurance papers

Keys

EPO / DVO papers

Medications for me and the children

Small saleable items

Address book

Pictures

Work permits

Welfare identification

Medical Records – for all family

members

Green Card

Passport

Divorce papers

Jewelry

Children's favorite toys or blankets

School records

\*\*\* I can keep the items concerning me in one location so that if I have to leave in a hurry, I can grab those items quickly.

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

Police Dept. - \_\_\_\_\_

Office for Women \_\_\_\_\_

Other - \_\_\_\_\_

or \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

or \_\_\_\_\_

## Ending the Call

It is time to end the call when:

- problem solving is completed and the client is satisfied
- the problem is not completely solved, but the call is going in circles
- the client is satisfied with the list of options, but not ready to make a decision
- the client decides to seek additional help from a professional counselor or from some other source

Ways to end the contact:

- the client ends it: "It has helped to talk . . . thanks!"
- the volunteer summarizes what has happen: "we've talked about your feelings about your partner and the abuse. Sounds like you still need some more time to think about all we've talked about before you make a decision."
- Restate a decision the client has made: "You are going to work on your safety plan, so you will be prepared if the violence begins again."

Other conversation closures:

- "Maybe we can talk about this again after you have time to think about it some more."
- "I hope things will be better for you soon."
- "Well, I wish you luck with your plans."
- "I'm glad you decided to talk about this."

Tracy Chapman, Tracy Chapman (1987)

**Behind the Wall:**

Last night I heard the screaming  
Loud voices behind the wall  
Another sleepless night for me  
It won't do no good to call  
The police  
Always come late  
If they come at all

Last night I heard the screaming  
Loud voices behind the wall  
Another sleepless night for me  
It won't do no good to call  
The police  
Always come late  
If they come at all

And when they arrive  
They say they can't interfere  
With domestic affairs  
Between a man and his wife  
And as they walk out the door  
The tears well up in her eyes

Last night I heard the screaming  
Then a silence that chilled my soul  
I prayed that I was dreaming  
When I saw the ambulance in the road

And the policeman said  
"I'm here to keep the peace  
Will the crowd disperse  
I think we all could use some sleep

Last night I heard the screaming  
Loud voices behind the wall  
Another sleepless night for me  
It won't do no good to call  
The police  
Always come late  
If they come at all

## Why Are Clients So ...

### . . . And What To Do About It

#### Angry

Often victims of domestic violence are afraid of expressing their anger at their abuser, so they direct their anger at others.

Helpful Phrases:

*"I'm hearing you say that you feel resentful towards . . ."*

*"It sounds like you are angry about that"*

#### Frustrated

Sometimes, clients have tried other avenues for help – their families, clergy, other agencies – and by the time they contact you, they may feel very frustrated.

*"It must be frustrating to feel like no one can help you."*

*"I'm sorry your mother said that about your marriage, sometimes those closest to us, say things that hurt us, but that doesn't mean they don't love us. It just means they don't fully understand the problem or the danger."*

*"I'm sorry (the agency or person) you called before wasn't able to help you."*

#### Dependent

It is very important that we encourage clients to make their own decisions, that they don't become dependent solely on us for support. If a client asks when they can call back and talk to you, say

*"You can call whenever you need to talk about your situation. The Office for Women always has trained volunteers ready to help you. You don't have to talk only to me."*

## Quiet

For some clients, it is very difficult to begin talking to a stranger about very personal matters.

*"I'm listening."*

*"I'd like to hear about your situation."*

*"Sometimes it's hard to get started (talking)."*

*Sounds like talking about this is difficult for you."*

## Fearful, hesitant

Remember, victims of Domestic Violence have been betrayed by the person who was supposed to love them. Reaching out to a complete stranger may be very frightening for them. Also, their batterer may have blamed them for the abuse, they may be afraid that you will blame them also.

*"No one deserves to be abused (hit, hurt, etc)."*

*"With all that you've been through, I guess that you have been feeling very vulnerable."*

## Unwilling to Leave the Abuser

It is not our role to tell the client what to do. We offer them options, help them to assess their risks and support their decisions.

## Taking Care of Yourself

You are embarking on a wonderful experience. You will soon be trained and ready to help and support clients. You may hear horrendous stories of abuse. It is very important that you plan on ways to relieve your stress and take care of yourself. Always have some nice activity planned following your shift. Some examples:

A hot bubble bath

A massage

A special food or drink treat (avoid caffeine or alcohol as they may intensify stress)

A not too serious book

A television or movie comedy

A phone call with a special friend

A walk

Time with a favorite child or pet

A manicure

A facial

A pot of herbal tea

What is your favorite way to unwind?

# Handling Difficult Situations

## Suicidal Clients

- 1). Obtain as much information as you can from active listening to avoid grilling the client for information. A caller who refuses to answer direct questions about identity, location, plan, etc. will often inadvertently reveal information during the course of the call. In addition, the caller will be more likely to give information to the counselor who has taken the time to establish rapport and build trust.

**Do not rush the caller to obtain information.**

Even if the caller won't give needed identifying information, it is vital that the counselor provides an opportunity for the caller to vent his/her strong emotions.

**Communicate to the caller that you are not going to give up on him/her just because he/she won't give identifying information.**

- 2). Ask questions, but be aware of the client's reactions. Open-ended questions facilitate rapport, but gently closed-ended questions are useful for obtaining information quickly. Intersperse questions with "understanding" comments (active listening).
- 3). Ask the client if he/she has ever felt this way before, and if so, what happened. This gives the client the chance to reflect and remember that things did improve and he/she did eventually feel better.
- 4). Ask: "If suicide were not an option, how else could the problem(s) be resolved?" This allows the client to drop the option long enough to consider other potential solutions.
- 5). Use the direct terms (die, kill yourself, suicide, death, corpse) to help the suicidal person face the reality and finality of death. This discourages the romanticizing of suicide.

- 6). Address the ambivalence the client is experiencing . . . that part of him/her that wants to live, but the other part find life too painful. Without giving false assurances that "everything will be OK", search for the side of the caller that wants to live. Explore the strengths in the person.
- 7). Help the suicidal person partialize his/her problems ... break them down into pieces so he/she does not feel so overwhelmed.
- 8). Encourage the person to refrain from making any serious, irreversible decisions while in a crisis. Talk about positive alternatives which may establish hope for the future.
- 9). Help the person think of one small task he/she can perform (getting a glass of water or tissue). This will help give the caller a sense of control.
- 10). Assess the person for risk level and determine which interventions are appropriate.

### Sexual Assault

Very often where there is violence within a relationship, there is sexual abuse also. Many women do not consider forced sex within a marriage as "rape". Forced sexual contact and intercourse is a violation of the person regardless of the circumstances in which it occurs.

### Child Abuse

Just like sexual assault, very often in families where domestic violence occurs, the batterer also abuses the children.

### Threats by the victim to hurt the abuser

Discuss the consequences of such actions with the client.

Discuss alternative options.

Assess the risk.

Report, if needed.

### Verbal abuse from the client

While we must be non-judgmental in regard to the client's choices and lifestyle; if the client is using language that we feel is threatening, we are not obligated to continue the conversation. We can say:

"I realize you are very upset and angry, but I cannot help you while you are using threatening language. When you are able to talk with me civilly, please call back. I really want to talk with you and discuss your situation."

### Calls from the abuser

If the Office for Women's phone number is published, there is a chance that batterers may call. Of course, we will not break any confidence of any client.

### Friends asking about clients

When our friends find out about our new volunteer position, they may be curious about the type of work you do and may press you for details. It is important that we never break confidentiality.

We can use this opportunity to education our friends about domestic violence and perhaps recruit them to become volunteers.