

CRISIS INTERVENTION: WHAT IS NOT HELPFUL

- 1. INUNDATING THEM WITH INFORMATION:** People in crisis have a limited capacity to assimilate information. After they have reached their limit, giving them too much information only serves to be confusing and overwhelming.
- 2. GIVING THEM TASKS THEY ARE NOT READY FOR:** People in crisis can usually only do one thing at a time. They need to be validated and praised authentically for accomplishing even the smallest of productive tasks.
- 3. SAYING, “I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL” or “I UNDERSTAND” WHEN YOU MAY NOT KNOW AT ALL HOW THEY FEEL.** Reactions and feelings are unique to each individual and personal to them. Even if you have experienced a trauma, you never really fully understand another person’s feelings. Victims may find these statements insensitive, even though they are meant with good intentions.
- 4. INTERRUPTING:** Often times victims need to vent or ramble to clear their Thoughts and begin to re-establish some sense of control before they can move on to more structured conversations.
- 5. SPECULATING ABOUT THINGS YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT:** People In crisis hear what you say as “fact”. Erroneous information may lead to secondary traumatization. This is especially true if there is a criminal investigation or the medical condition of a loved one has not been completely determined yet. Be very careful about what information you impart. Do not give false hope.
- 6. PROLONGING DEPENDENCE ON YOU:** As soon as possible, help Victims and survivors transfer their interactions to those people who are near them in the future. Remember that any assistance you offer should be to facilitate their independence. This can be very difficult, especially if you as a responder feel attached to the victim. Emotions – yours and theirs – run high during a crisis. It can be very difficult to separate your needs from those of the victim. However, it is vital that your focus stays on their needs solely. Your emotional needs have to be met as well, but this needs to be done by you obtaining support from others.
- 7. DISCOURAGING ANY EMOTIONS, ESPECIALLY IF THEY ARE UNUSUAL OR FRIGHTENING TO YOU:** People in crisis demonstrate a broad array of emotions and behaviors that may be unfamiliar to you. As long as they are not engaging in dangerous behaviors towards themselves and/or others, allow their emotions to take their natural course.
- 8. INSISTING THAT THEY TALK TO YOU:** Sometimes people just do not want to talk with a counselor, or they are not ready to do so. You must respect this. They may be ready later. If they need to be alone, allow them the space to do so safely. Make sure they have referrals in case they change their mind.

