
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & DE-ESCALATION

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LENAPE | VALLEY
FOUNDATION

Recognize

Recognize signs of potential crisis situations

Demonstrate

Demonstrate active listening and de-escalation strategies

Identify

Identify options for both immediate and long-term intervention

OBJECTIVES

Physical

- Tired, disheveled, more unkempt than usual, weight loss
- Declining hygiene, cuts/bruises

Emotional

- No longer enjoying work, activities or hobbies, angry/irritable
- Increasing sadness, hopelessness, despair, rage

Behavioral

- Late or cancelling plans/commitments, secretive
- Isolation, absenteeism/presenteeism, odd/erratic behavior, rapid mood swings

Psychological

- Difficulty concentrating, indecisiveness
- Self-blame/criticism, racing thoughts, mind going blank

NOTICING
SIGNS
OF
STRUGGLE

URGENT CRISIS SITUATIONS

Medical Emergencies

Overdose or severe effects of
Substance Use

Severe psychosis

- Symptoms
- Feelings vs beliefs
- Risk of harm

SUICIDAL BEHAVIORS OR ATTEMPT

Risk Factors

- Extreme agitation
- Insomnia
- Intolerable chronic pain
- Loss or trauma (current)
- Sexual activity
- Recent act/threats of aggression
- Social isolation
- Self-injurious behaviors (i.e. cutting, etc.)
- Persistent/frequent family conflict

Hopelessness

Desire + Intent + Capability

Recent alcohol/drug use

Recent hospitalization

Family History

Previous Attempt

Access to firearms/lethal means

Impulsivity

SUICIDAL BEHAVIORS OR ATTEMPT

Signs and Symptoms

- Drastic behavior change
- Writing/talking about death, obsession
- No sense of purpose
- Feeling trapped/agitated

Ask the Question

- Are you thinking about suicide?
- Are you thinking about killing yourself?

HIGH RISK

Danger to self

- History of multiple or recent suicide attempts; current intent, plan and means; inability to safety plan; no support system; not cooperative

Danger to others

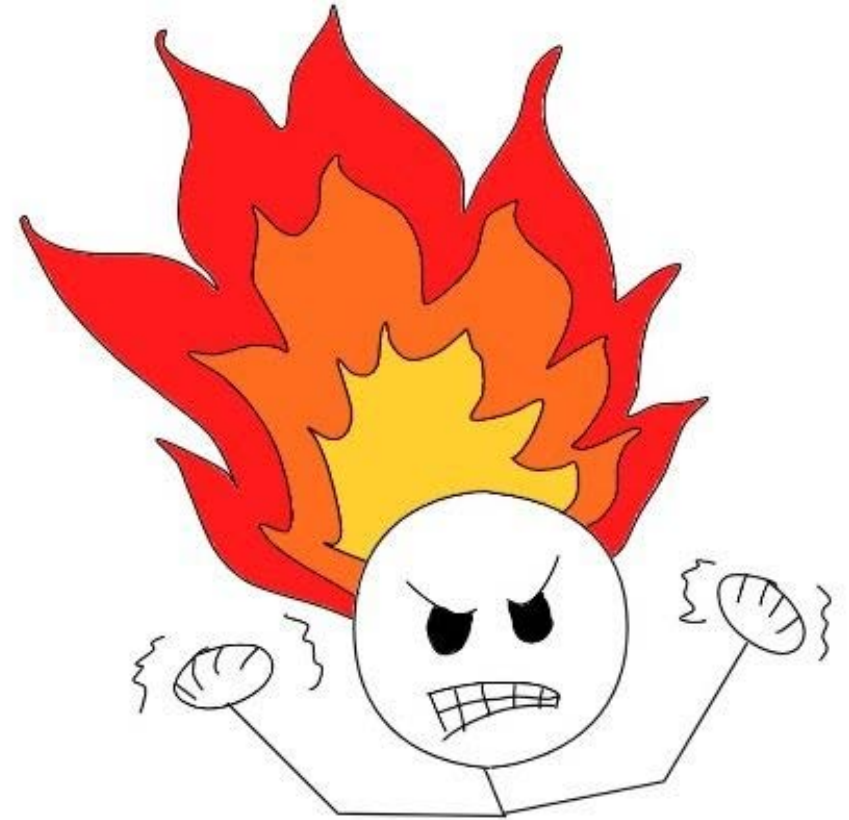
- Past history of violence with current threat to specific individual or combination of psychosis, not taking medications as prescribed and substance abuse

IT'S NOT
ABOUT
THE
NAIL

ALLEY
ION

DE-ESCALATION IS NOT

Tell people to Calm Down in a stern voice while pointing at them.



SELF-AWARENESS

Awareness of your personal response to stress/threats allows for better control of your reactions

- Physiological
- Fear

Awareness of your own biases allows you to suspend judgement

- Unconditional Positive Regard
- Curiosity

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

- Unconditional Positive Regard
- Strengths-based Approach
 - Problem Solving
- Cultural Competencies
 - Recognize the role of community, culture, faith, sexual orientation and gender identity, age, language and economic status in recovery
- Flexibility
- Respect and Dignity
- Convey Hope and Recovery
- Provide opportunities for individuals to include family and other close supporters as essential partners in their recovery
- Share information and decision-making. Support individuals as active participants in their care.

PROFESSIONALISM PRINCIPLE

- The attitudes of Mental Health Professionals have an impact on individual's behavior
- Cynicism, pessimism, and other destructive attitudes frequently aggravate assaultive incidents.
- Mental Health Professionals who accept responsibility for their job choice and performance are less likely to contribute to unnecessary risk.

KEY
QUESTIONS TO
ASK YOUR SELF

What brought me to this job?

What keeps me here?

What are my attitudes to the individuals that we serve?

What can I be grateful for in the moment?

HELPFUL OR UNHELPFUL?

I am concerned about you

I know exactly what you're going through, the same thing happened to me 2 years ago

Something seems to be bothering you - do you want to talk?

It's such a beautiful day, how can you be sad?

Have you spoken to anyone about this before?

Pull yourself together.

HOW DO THEY KNOW YOU'RE LISTENING?

Non-Verbal

- Eye - contact
- Facial expressions
- Open posture
- Volume and tone of voice
- Listen to understand, not to respond

Verbal

- Questions
- Mmhhh...
- That must be...
- It sounds like...



Advice vs. Information

Practical

Reassuring

Validating

=HOPE

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Do's

- Continuously assess for safety
- Listen to understand
- Speak slowly and confidently
- Appear calm and confident
- Offer choices
- Take a break if needed
- Debrief

Don'ts

- Make assumptions
- Minimize their experience
- Give Advice
- Make threats or promises you can't keep
- Restrict movement
- "Calm down!"



INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

Professionals

- Psychiatrists
- Nurse Practitioners
- Psychologists
- Therapists
- Counselors
- Social Workers

Treatments

- Medication
- Therapy/counseling
 - Individual, group, family, marriage



LVF ADULT & CHILDREN'S MOBILE CRISIS

- All of Bucks County
- Monday-Friday 7a-11p
 - 3 staggered teams
- Saturday-Sunday 9a-9p
- Overnight On-call
 - One crisis worker responds with police
- Telehealth - Phone or Zoom

Referrals 24/7
877.435.7709



SITE-BASED CRISIS CENTERS

- Central Bucks - Doylestown Hospital (enter through ER)
 - 215.345.2273
- Lower Bucks - Lower Bucks Hospital (ER vs Center behind hospital)
 - 215.785.9765

Upper Bucks - St. Luke's Quakertown



COMMUNITY
SUPPORTS

Anonymous/Support groups

Nutrition/Exercise

Faith-based

Self-help

DON'T FORGET YOUR OXYGEN MASK!

Self-care = practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health

8 Domains

- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Environmental
- Intellectual
- Occupational
- Physical
- Financial
- Community



QUESTIONS?

Thanks for all you are doing to prevent suicide in our community!

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