

## Communicating with People in Crisis

The purpose is to help to restore the individual to a sense of normalcy or level of functioning equal to or higher than prior to the crisis. Focusing on facts, feelings and the future provides caregivers with a simple road map. The ABC's of crisis intervention is a step by step strategy for effective communication.

- F**  
**A**  
**C**  
**T**  
**S**
- A = Achieve Contact** – Provide for safety and security, restore authority and control.
1. Introduce yourself, name, role, purpose.
  2. Assure for the safety (*emotional* and *physical*) of the individual.
  3. Ask individual how s/he would like to be addressed (if not known to caregiver.)
  4. As appropriate, collect information regarding residency, and health conditions, contacting family members, any support systems or friends.
  5. Is he/she taking or needing medication? (Use discernment).
  6. **Identify the individual's feelings, reactions and perceptions.**
- F**  
**E**  
**E**  
**L**  
**I**  
**N**  
**G**  
**S**
- B = Boil Down the Problem** – To allow for reactions and interaction (ventilate and be validated by telling story); determine the most pressing problem and to help restore dignity.
1. Ask individual to briefly describe what has just happened.
  2. Encourage the individual to talk about the present; discuss exposure to event; sensory experiences; thoughts and feelings tied to event.
  3. Avoid criticism of their actions.
  4. Ask what the most pressing challenge is.
  5. Review and clarify what you heard as the *primary and most immediate* concern/reaction.
  6. Ask if the individual has ever experienced a similar situation or crisis in the past.
  7. How was it handled? Consider how the individual can regain control and authority.
  8. Review what you heard as the primary concern.
  9. Transition to “coping with the problem”.
- F**  
**U**  
**T**  
**U**  
**R**  
**E**
- C = Cope with the Problem** – To help predict and prepare for the future. To accept a “new normal” or “new reality”.
1. Review what is the *most important* need--the bottom line?
  2. Explore what the *individual* feels is the best solution or options.
  3. Help the individual formulate a plan of action: needed resources, specific actions and timeline.
  4. Reaffirm the future and talk in hopeful terms.
  5. Arrange for a follow-up contact or visit with the individual.
- D = Determine the Meaning of the Event\*** – To assist in offering opportunities for restoration and hope and find meaning in the traumatic event.
1. Assist in allowing the individual to accept the reality and to experience the pain of the loss.
  2. Reassure the individual. Help individual plan for future support and assistance if desired.
  3. Assist in helping the individual identify the new normal and new reality and understanding or appreciation of beliefs and assumptions about our world.
  4. Allow questions about faith, God, spiritual issues. Addressing issues of forgiveness, and anger. Determine how the trauma fits into the individual's life.
  5. Withdraw emotional energy from the loss and reinvest it in other relationships and other aspects of life.