RESPONDING TO CRISIS SITUATIONS

OVERVIEW

A crisis is a perception or experience of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds the person's current resources and coping mechanisms. According to the American Psychological Association common signs of a mental health crisis include:

- Dramatic shifts in sleep habits; Sudden changes in mood
- Withdrawal from normal activities
- Decreased performance at school or work
- Neglect of personal hygiene & changes in weight

In Children:
- Frequent tantrums or are intensely irritable
- Regressive toileting challenges i.e. bed wetting
- Unexplained headaches & stomach pains

HOW TO PROVIDE SUPPORT

Tip 1: Remain calm and avoid escalation

In periods of crisis, someone may feel overwhelmed and can negatively respond to increased stressors. Avoid expressing a strong negative reaction during the crisis.

Tip 2: Listen non-judgmentally & be mindful of language

Non-judgmental listening is not about avoiding judgements but being sure not to impose those judgements on a person in need of support. Language and tone can perpetuate stigma associated with mental health and prevent individuals from seeking support.

Tip 3: Person-centered support

Rather than telling a person in crisis what to do, ask the person some strategies they have used in the past. Practice deep breathing strategies if they suggest speaking to professional.

Tip 4: Take time and be patient

Crisis does not have a schedule and although it may be inconvenient, be patient with someone experiencing a crisis. Getting better takes time, everyone recovers at different pace.

Tip 5: Maintain Safety and access resources

Ensure your own safety before supporting others. If you do not feel safe, please contact emergency services and remain as close with the person until professional helps arrives.