

**LIFE SPACE CRISIS INTERVENTION:
The skill of reclaiming children and youth involved in self-defeating
patterns of behavior**

This 6 day workshop, for up to 40 participants, is designed to help create long lasting behavioral change. Traditional means of addressing students inappropriate behavior (disciplinary action and/or regularly scheduled counseling) often fail to have the desired effect of positively changing the students long term behavior. Life Space Crisis Intervention, developed by Dr. Nicholas Long, and based on the work of Fritz Redl, teaches staff how to take advantage of the "window of opportunity"; the time of crisis when the student is often highly motivated to talk about issues.

This workshop is applicable for all staff who work with students who exhibit chronic, non-productive behavior patterns and is especially appropriate for school counselors, psychologists, special education teachers, administrators, and crisis support personnel.

COURSE CONTENT

DAYS 1 & 2- FOUNDATION SKILLS

Participants learn the four foundation skills necessary to do a successful Life Space Crisis Interview.

The Difference Between The Psychological World of the Child & Adult During Crisis

In the first skill segment, staff develop an understanding of the difference between the psychological world of the child and the adult in a time of crisis. They discover that when children experience stress they function on a purely concrete-emotional level, whereas adults function on an abstract, rational-logical level. As a result there is often a great deal of talking at each other, but virtually no true communication. In order for true communication to start, the staff member must be able to first "join with" the student and drain off his/her intense emotions.

The Power of The Conflict Cycle

We next explore the importance and power of the conflict cycle; a paradigm which explains the cyclical nature of conflict; demonstrating how the way the student perceives, thinks, and feels is manifested in behavior, evokes a response from an adult/peer, and begins a cycle of escalation. Staff learn that a student in stress can create their feelings in adults. If unaware of these dynamics, adults can unwittingly be drawn into power struggles in which there are no winners.

This section includes an in-depth analysis of each of the component parts of the cycle. Staff learn that a student's self-concept and view of the world drive their feelings and behavior to create a self-fulfilling prophecy. In order to influence lasting changes in student's habitual behavioral response patterns, staff must be able to recognize and deal with the student's characteristic thought patterns and defense mechanisms. All too often, staff get "caught" up in the student's defensive behavior and the real issue is forgotten. As a result, the student is not able to gain insight into his/her self-defeating behavior patterns and does not accept responsibility for his/her actions. Since the real issue is never effectively addressed, students repeat the same behavior and have no motivation to change. Participants learn strategies to cut through typical defensive behaviors such as: denial, rationalization, staff splitting, role reversal, passive aggression, silence and projection.

The Fundamentals of Interviewing

Students who feel listened to and supported are more likely to actively engage in discussions which will help them gain insight into their role in a crisis situation. In order to guide students through an insight building process, staff must be effective communicators. In this section, participants practice skills of attending, listening, observing, responding, and decoding.

Drain Off & Timeline

Given role play situations taken from actual incidents, participants rehearse the skills they've learned. They practice how to release or "drain off" student's emotional intensity; moving them from a concrete-emotional to a rational-logical level. Once this is accomplished, they practice the process of obtaining a timeline; finding out details of the incident from the student's perspective. From this point, the staff are ready to learn the actual prescriptive reclaiming interviews and begin the process of guiding the student to accept responsibility for, and gain insight into, their non-productive behavior.

DAYS 3 & 4-RECLAIMING SKILLS

In this section, participants learn the six different types of insight building reclaiming interviews designed to address typical non-productive behavior patterns.

Red Flag Reclaiming Intervention

The Red Flag interview is used with students who: carry in problems from home or bus; carry over problems from one class to another; or act out as a result of the curriculum striking an emotional nerve. The key indicator that this type of interview is warranted is that the student's inappropriate behavior appears to come "from out of the blue". These students *over react* to normal school rules and procedures with emotional outbursts (screaming, crying, threatening, attacking, or running away) and appear motivated to escalate his/her behavior into a blatant "no win situation" power struggle with staff. The child usually

blames others for his/her problems and is totally unaware that he/she is creating his/her own problems by displacing his/her anger or frustration.

The goal of the Red Flag interview is to help these children see that they are displacing their intense feelings from one situation into another and to help them understand that they can talk to staff about things that are bothering them rather than create new problems for themselves in school.

Reality Rub Reclaiming Intervention

The Reality Rub interview is used with students who demonstrate any of the following three types of behavior patterns:

1. They do not see an event as others do; they are unable to perceive or interpret events accurately; perseverate; are unaware of their own behavior or reactions of others, and are confused about the sequence of events
2. They act out to avoid an unpleasant event
3. They test the limits of the setting

The goal of the Reality Rub interview is to organize reality for the child and to help him/her gain the insight that he/she only remembered one part of the problem. It helps the child understand why the crisis happened, what he/she did to make it worse; and what he/she can do in the future to keep the situation from occurring again.

Symptom Estrangement Reclaiming Intervention

The Symptom Estrangement interview is used with students who justify their aggressive behavior and are not motivated to change. They frequently cast themselves in the role of the victim who has been exploited by others and must now do whatever they have to protect themselves. Their perceptions include that: they will do whatever they have to do to take care of themselves; they won't be pushed around; no one has the right to tell them anything; no one would help them anyway; they have a reputation to maintain; and there is nothing wrong with them. These students truly feel justified in their actions and they have no remorse for their behavior.

The purpose of the Symptom Estrangement interview is to benignly confront the unacceptable behavior. The staff member wants to show the student that they are tricking themselves into believing that it is "OK" to behave in a way that hurts or infringes on the rights of others without feeling guilty, that there are people who will help them solve their problems and that they do not have the right to take the law into their own hands. The goal is to slowly expose their self-deception while maintaining a caring relationship.

Massaging Numb Values Reclaiming Intervention

The Massaging Numb Values interview is used with students who feel so badly about themselves that whenever they make a mistake or things don't go their way, they are burdened with intense feelings of guilt and maintain a defeatist attitude. Their perception is that they are terrible people who can never do

anything right and need to be punished. Because they cannot handle failing, they blow situations totally out of proportion and frequently act out even more.

The goal of this interview is to strengthen the students self concept, put the situation into perspective, and show the student that he/she has more self-control than he/she realizes.

New Tools Salesmanship Reclaiming Intervention

The New Tools Salesmanship interview is used with students who have the *correct attitudes* toward adults, peers and learning, but who lack the appropriate social skills to be successful. The student has the right idea (ie. wants to participate in class) but has the wrong behavior (ie. shouting out). The goal is to teach the student new "age appropriate" social skills by using pro-social skills training strategies.

Manipulation of Body Boundaries Reclaiming Intervention

The Manipulation of Body Boundaries interview is used with students who are either: involved in self-defeating (false) friendship with an exploitive classmate or are being "set up" and "controlled" by another student.

The goal is to have the student realize that a friend is someone who helps you and not one who exploits or uses you or is to show the student that someone else is manipulating him/her into acting out when he/she responds to their teasing/provocation.

DAYS 5 & 6-PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER AND DEMONSTRATION OF COMPETENCY

Having had ample opportunities to role play the various interviews in the workshop setting, participants put theory into practice in their work environments. They select an actual interview they have performed and submit a paper on it to the presenter for feedback prior to Day 5. Day 5 is a chance to meet, share experiences, problem solve and fine tune skills.

Life Space Crisis Intervention is a competency based program. On Day 6, participants will be tested on their knowledge of the course material via a written true-false test, a diagnostic role playing exam and self-evaluation of their knowledge of the 26 LSCI competencies. Participants who successfully meet the criteria will be awarded a Certificate of Competence from the Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute signed by Dr. Nicholas Long and the senior LSCI trainer. Graduate credit in either Psychology or Special Education (3 semester hours) is also available from Augustana College.

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"It has been a very long time since I have attended/participated in a training I felt was absolutely critical to the success and improvement of a department. I struggled with how I would use LSI in its entirety with "regular ed" kids initially. Through trial and error, participation & sharing with other workshop participants I found the value and balance I needed to utilize LSI. Rarely a day goes by now that I don't have an opportunity to utilize some LSI strategy."

Susan Mullikin, Director of Counseling, Wayne CSD

"Very informative and enlightening, a must for all classroom teachers at ALL levels."

Dick McCarthy, Teacher Remedial Math, Phelps-Clifton CSD

"This workshop has been one of the most useful I have ever attended in my 16 years in education."

Lynne Erdle, Special Programs Supervisor, Canandaigua City School District

"What every educator should know about how to deal with kids."

Ellen Polimeni, Assistant Principal-Middle School, Canandaigua City School District

"The content is vital for anyone dealing with, not only children & adolescents, but almost anyone in a profession requiring a great deal of interaction with others."

Michelle Cuva, School Psychologist, Newark CSD

"The students also have more confidence in my abilities because of the new skills I've gained through the content of this workshop. This workshop needs to be mandatory for all staff members who have direct interactions with students."

Nick Violas, Teacher Assistant, Support Room, W-FL BOCES