



KENTUCKY COMMUNITY CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

Basic Communication Techniques

As critical incident and traumatic event mental and behavioral health responders, effective communication is paramount. Whether it's guiding a CISM debriefing session with a firefighting team post-incident or providing psychological first aid in a FEMA shelter, communication is indispensable. Despite its seeming simplicity, communication is a skill that requires continual honing.



You can practice communication skills daily to be more prepared when called to deploy to a critical incident or disaster site. Check-out page two of the newsletter for some fundamental communication techniques to remember and practice, ensuring readiness to engage with first responders and communities in the aftermath of critical incidents or disasters.

Training Resource

Finding training to enhance your skills in crisis response can be challenging, especially when seeking free options. Fortunately, there's a valuable resource that offers free training in the field of mental and behavioral health critical incident and disaster response. You can visit www.crisisresponse.org and explore their range of trainings that you can access after creating a free account. The courses you can take vary, depending on availability, but they are currently offering two online trainings coming in 2024, "Strategic Response to Crisis," and "Grief Following Trauma." Both have 60 slots remaining at the time of this writing.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to check out www.crisisresponse.org, create a free account, and explore the training courses available. It's a valuable opportunity to enhance your expertise and readiness in crisis and disaster response!



Click here to visit Crisis Response Website



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TEAM
KENTUCKY
CABINET FOR HEALTH
AND FAMILY SERVICES



Basic Communication Techniques

TECHNIQUE	PURPOSE	COMMENT
SILENCE	-to promote speech -to encourage continued uninterrupted speech	Careful! May inadvertently communicate non-caring, lack of interest
NON VERBAL ATTENDING	-to encourage continued uninterrupted speech -to probe -to show interest	Nodding of the head and facial expressions are examples
RESTATEMENT	-to show you are listening -to check for accuracy -to clarify semantics -to probe	Careful! Used too frequently you can sound like a mindless parrot. Good to clarify semantic ambiguities
PARAPHRASING	-to communicate interest, understanding, empathy -to check for listening accuracy to allow speaker -to probe for further content	Use more frequently than restatement. Easier and more natural than restatement. A powerful behavior change to 'hear' own thoughts and technique
REFLECTION OF EMOTION	-to identify the speaker's feelings based on verbal and/or nonverbal cues. -to encourage discussion of feelings and remove emotional	Important to allow feelings to be expressed, otherwise they block problem solving and tend to escalate. But be careful! Don't overuse this technique.
OPEN-END QUESTIONS	-to provide maximal response options	Good to use in early phases Use when you get 'stuck' To question without restricting answers
CLOSED-END QUESTIONS	-to direct or focus responses -to provide structure	Good when pursuing a specific target. You only learn what you know to ask