

# Tips and Techniques for De-escalating Your Youth in Crisis.

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# So...What's a Crisis?

A crisis happens when.....

.....we are emotionally overwhelmed by something going on in our life and the usual tools or coping strategies that have worked before are *not* working now.

# And...What's trauma?

- Trauma comes from the Greek work for “wound”.
- Trauma: any kind of extraordinary event in which there is a perceived or actual threat of imminent harm to yourself or someone you love.

## Tip #1: Manage yourself.

- If your child is in crisis, your child will do much better if you present as calm, concerned, loving and accepting.

# Tip #1: Manage yourself.

- If we find that we are angry, let's park that anger for now. It's not about us at all.
- Manage the tone, volume and the choice of words. You want to appear calm, concerned, approachable....

## Tip #2: Pay attention to changes

- Notice any troubling changes at the earliest possible stage and make sure you talk to your child about them. “I notice you aren’t yourself lately. Are you ok?”

## Tip #2: Pay attention to changes

- They may respond with “Nothing” “I’m fine”... but they now they know that you have noticed something.
- Begin prevention efforts as early as possible! As soon as you notice something is amiss. And let them know that you have noticed. Express concern.

## Tip #3: Check in often!

- At LEAST daily, but more is better.
- “How are you? You know you can tell me anything right? There’s nothing you can say or do that will make me stop loving you.”




# Tip #3: Check in often!

- As you check in, remember to manage yourself. You may be upset or angry at your child. Try to set aside that feeling for now.
- Your child did not do anything wrong and He/she's not in trouble.
- This is NOT about attention.
- Or maybe it is and they NEED attention.

# Again.....

- Manage yourself. Your child may be headed for a crisis, but your child will do much better if you present as calm, concerned, loving and accepting.
- This alone may do it!



What happens if  
they actually tell  
you something!

# The Crisis has arrived!

## *What does this look like?*

- It can look wild and angry and aggressive. Throwing things, profanity, holes in the walls.
- It can also look devastatingly sad and despondent, full of tears and sobs.
- It can also be silent! (this one's harder)

# Tip#1: Manage ourselves.

- First thing: Safety.
- Everyone is going to be safer if we the grownups once again manage ourselves.
- Holes can be patched later. Conversations about respectful language and out of line behavior can be had later.
- Right now, you have a child that appears to be out of control. This child needs your help right now.

# Express loving concern

- Express concern. “I’m worried about you. What’s going on? I need you to sit down with me and tell me what’s going on.”
- If you appear calm and in control of yourself, this will help *them* to be calm and reduce anxiety.
- Stay present. Stay engaged. If you can’t think of anything to say, so you can just be there. Be present. Breathe! Remember how much you love this child.

# Communication tips:

- “I” statements
  - Active Listening
  - Validation
  - Silence (non-verbal concerned communication)
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- Note: A crisis doesn't always have a solution...only a resolution! (A return to balance)

# The Good news! It gets better!

- Almost every episode gets better! Children calm down and we all feel better.
- Post episode planning is a good idea. A plan could be put in place that could make these episodes fewer and less severe. Come to some agreements. Sometimes this can wait until everyone's had a good night's sleep.



# The Scary Part: Suicide Risk

- Take suicidal statements seriously. Many kids don't mean it at all but some kids do! If you think that your child is considering suicide, again early intervention is best. It's scary, but important. Start a conversation.
- Depression can be treated. Untreated depression creates hopelessness and helplessness. This increases suicide risk.

# The Scary Part: Suicide Risk

- “ I’ve noticed that things have been very hard for you lately and we’ve all been through a lot. Sometimes when people are deeply sad and they see no way out, they think about killing themselves. Do you ever think about this?” And then asks about a plan: Do you have a plan for how you would do this?”
- If the answer to either question is YES, then it’s time to make a plan together for safety.

# The Scary Part: Suicide Risk

- Secure any firearms. Unloading them is good. Getting them out of the house for a while is better.
- Firearms are far and away the leading means of suicide.
- Secure sharps as best as you can. Secure all medications.
- No house can be made completely safe, BUT you can reduce access to lethal means.

# The Scary Part: Suicide Risk

- Assure your child that you will keep them safe.
- Let them know how much they are loved. Stay with your child.
- This may mean sleeping on the floor in their room.
- This may mean staying up and keeping an eye on them.



**BAKER ACTS STINK!**

# Mental Health Disorders are Real.

- Depression and anxiety
- ADHD
- ODD
- PTSD
- Bi-Polar disorder.
- Autism

These require action and (often) medication.

# Need help?

- LifeStream: 866-355-9394 (24/7)
  - Impact: 352-587-2378
  - Family Doctor.
  - School social workers
  - Your insurance provider
- 
- Me: 352-531-9678
  - [lreidt@lsbc.net](mailto:lreidt@lsbc.net)