

Active Listening

INSTRUCTORS:

Goal:

The goal is to supply officers with communications skills to address

Person's going through crisis and to recognize when a person is going through a crisis. Officers will learn how to respond to people going through a crisis according to the level of escalation.

Objectives:

- Officers will be able to explain Crisis Behavior and its relevance to CIT training
- Discuss officer interactions with persons who have a mental illness
- Explain how to utilize observation as a tool for evaluative purposes

Officers will be able to explain Crisis Behavior and its relevance to CIT training

Communication skills

Communication is a basic **tactics** skill in Crisis Intervention

Done properly, it is reassuring, establishes understanding between people and **defuses** intense emotion

Done poorly, it is threatening, leads to confusion and increases frustration, anger and fear

It is essential for the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Officer to communicate well, because the way he/she does can solve or create the problem

It is imperative that the CIT officer understands that there is a fundamental difference Between LISTENING and HEARING.

HEARING simply involves the receiving of auditory information from an outside source.

LISTENING involves the act of processing the auditory information that was received to the point that it is properly understood, acknowledging receiving it and verifying the validity of the message received (that it was understood).

Is this an act of Listening or an act of Hearing?

Review of our function in the Crisis Stage.

*Stages of an Incident: 1) Pre-crisis, 2) ****Crisis**** (What we are talking about today),
3) Negotiation or Adaptation, 4) Surrender or Resolution*

A. What is the CIT Officer's first job when he contacts a person who is in crisis?

1. Safety and Security

(Never Sacrifice Safety For Rapport)

2. Ventilation and Validation

3. Prediction and Planning

First Active Listening Exercise pre-instruction

Interactions with persons who have a mental illness

Officers' actions

REVIEW OF OUR FUNCTION IN A CRISIS STAGE

What is the CIT Officers first job when he contacts a person who is in crisis?

Safety and Security

Ventilation and Validation

Prediction and Planning

Safety in approaching an emotionally disturbed person

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Goal

to relieve the person's **fears** and to begin to defuse emotions

Threats the person feels:

life, predictability and control

What do most people expect of the police in a confrontation?

He/She may be out of control BUT our response needs to be based on our feelings and actions, not his/hers

Start changing the **expectations** from the opening interchange: Reassure

"I am Officer (your name), and I am a Crisis Intervention Officer with (agency). I'd like to know how I can help you"

Pause and listen

Paraphrase what you heard

"We have things under control, so nobody will make things worse"

Get him/her to think about his side of it

"How are things with you? Have you got it under control?"

VENTILATION AND VALIDATION

Goal: To communicate understanding of the person's situation, feelings and expectations

Active Listening is not about problem solving. Active Listening is about gathering data, allowing ventilation to diffuse the crisis by validating emotions, and ultimately BUILDING RAPPORT.

It is highly improbable you will get a person to do anything for you unless you have established rapport.

You can't help solve someone's problems if you don't have rapport established.

SYMPATHY vs. EMPATHY

SYMPATHY:

- A feeling or expression of pity or sorrow for the distress of another.
- Implies pity or over involvement.
Being able to see yourself in the same position

EMPATHY:

- Identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings and motives.
- Implies objectivity and understanding and thereby builds trust.
✓ Being able to understand the person's feelings.

There are 7 essential skills that make up the basis of active listening which the CIT Officer will need to master and demonstrate:

Emotional Labeling

Paraphrasing

Reflecting / Mirroring

Effective Pauses

Minimal Encouragers

I" Messages

Open-ended Questions

An easy way to remember these is with an Acronym...

MORE PIE

M - Minimal Encouragers

O - Open Ended Questions

R - Reflective / Mirroring

E - Emotional Labeling

P - Paraphrasing

I - "I" Messages

E - Effective Pauses

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

Paraphrasing – a concise response to a person that reflects the essence of the speaker’s content in the words of the listener

Reflective / Mirroring – comes in two responses

Reflecting feeling – Mirroring the other person’s feeling in succinct form

Reflecting meaning – Mirroring both content and feelings plus the future implications

Form: “When _____ happens, you seem to feel _____ because _____”

Emotional labeling - Identifying the subject’s feelings (you sound Happy, or Sad, or Frustrated)

Minimal Encouragers – The use of short phrases that encourage the subject to continue talking. (Hmm, U-huh, then what, or what else)

Effective Pauses (silence) – The use of pauses that encourage the subject to continue talking

“I” Messages – Putting an “I” before the CIT officer’s statement to make it clear that what follows are the CIT officers thoughts, feelings or opinions

Open Ended Questions – Questions phrased in a manner designed to encourage further discussion by the subject rather than a question that can be answered with a yes or no response

❖ Emotional Labeling

- Generally the FIRST listening skill to be used.
- The intent is to respond to the emotion heard rather than the content.
- Demonstrates that you are really listening and are tuned into what the subject is emotionally experiencing.
- Do not tell the person how they are feeling, but how they seem or sound like they are feeling.
- Use throughout the intervention and point out any noticeable changes in emotion.

**DO NOT BE AFRAID TO LABEL THE WRONG EMOTION, IF YOU ARE WRONG THE SUBJECT WILL TELL YOU SO!
(AND AT LEAST YOU STARTED A TWO WAY CONVERSATION.)**

EMOTIONAL LABELING EXAMPLES:

- You Sound _____
- You Seem _____
- I Hear _____

❖ **Paraphrasing**

- A summary in your own words as to what you were just told.
- Demonstrates that you are listening.
- Creates Empathy and Rapport by demonstrating that you are listening and understanding what is being said.
- Use of paraphrasing clarifies content, checks perceptions, highlights issues and helps to obtain additional intelligence.

Also clears up miscommunications.

EXAMPLES OF PARAPHRASING

- “Are you telling me _____?”
- “So what you are saying _____?”
- “What I’m understanding you say is__.”

❖ **Reflective / Mirroring**

Repeating back the last word or phrase the subject just said.

- Subconsciously forces the subject to continue talking.
- Asks for more information without guiding the direction.
- Gets information when you don’t have enough to ask a good question.

✓ ***GREAT IF YOU ARE LOST!***

- Can also be called “Parroting, because you repeat the last part like a Parrot.”

❖ Effective Pause

- **An Effective Pause is silence.**
- **Silence is effective if it serves your purpose.**
- **Most people are not comfortable with silence and will fill it with talk.**
- **Effective Pauses also help make sure that you have the persons attention.**

❖ Minimal Encouragers

- **The use of short phrases that encourage the subject to continue talking. (Hmm, Uh-huh)**
- **The sounds you make, especially on the telephone, to let the person know that you are there and listening.**
- **May be short questions such as, “Oh?”, “Really?” and “When?”**
- **Does not interfere with the flow of the conversation and encourages the subject to continue talking.**
- **You must be paying attention so you do not accidentally validate negative behaviors. (“OK”).**

❖ “I” Messages

- **Enables us to let the subject know how they are making us feel, why we feel that way and what they can do to remedy the situation.**
- **Conveys the above information in a non-threatening way and doesn’t put the subject on the defensive.**
- **“I” Messages are a little harder to use until some form of rapport has been established.**

❖ Use of “I” Messages

- **When you cannot communicate because of the intense emotions being directed at you.**
- **When the subject is trying to manipulate you or psych you out.**
- **When you need to refocus the subject.**
- **When you are being verbally attacked.**

❖ Structure of an “I” Message

I FEEL (emotion you are feeling)

WHEN YOU (his / her behavior)

BECAUSE (your reason)

❖ Open Ended Questions

- Question phrased in a manner designed to encourage further discussion by the subject rather than a question that can be answered with a yes or no response.
- Usually begins with *who, what, when, where, why* or *how?*
- Used to help the subject start talking, to elicit examples of specific behavior and to focus the subject’s feelings.
- Need to avoid rapid fire questions to make sure it does not come out as an interrogation. Use other Active Listening skills between open ended questions to avoid this.

Second Active Listening Skill Exercise

ROADBLOCKS

ROADBLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN A CRISIS STAGE

Failure to Listen Actively

During the Crisis Stage, let the person set the direction of conversation

Listen/look for hidden cues not verbally expressed

Do not **interrupt**

Do not interject your **prejudices**

Let the person know you heard what he/she said

Tendency to Judge Others

Criticizing

Name-calling

Diagnosing

Avoid Sending Solutions

Ordering

Threatening

Moralizing

Advising

Excessive Questioning

Avoiding the Other Person's Concerns

Diverting

Logical argument

Humor

How to utilize observation as a tool for evaluative purposes

Clues

CLUES THAT A CRISIS HAS BEEN DEFUSED

Content is less aggressive

Tone is more modulated

SETTING THE STAGE FOR PREDICTION AND PLANNING

Problem-Solving questions

“I” Messages”

Indirect Suggestions-embedded statements

Guided Imagery

ACTIVE LISTENING

Purpose

Establish rapport

Assurance of safety

Intelligence gathering

Do not problem solve

Process (Active Listening Skills)

Emotion – Labeling

Paraphrasing

Reflecting/Mirroring

Effective pauses (silence)

Minimal encouragers

“I” Messages

Open – Ended questions

ACTIVE LISTENING PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Remember do not problem solve, just use your active listening skills:

M - minimal encouragers

O - open ended questions

R - reflecting/Mirroring

E - effective pauses

P - paraphrasing

I - "I" messages

E - emotion labeling

Notes: