

Introduction to Crisis Counseling & Intervention– CC 100

In this course, the student will be introduced to crisis counseling, understanding how to manage crisis incidents or situations in people seeking help from a biblical perspective. Students will know how to intervene in crises emergencies and provide assistance tailored to the individual (counselee's) predicament.

Course Objectives:

1. The student will gain a theological understanding of a crisis.
2. The student will gain a biblical understanding of suffering.
3. The student will understand the role of biblical crisis counselors in believers' lives.
4. The student will learn ways of helping those in crisis.
4. The student will gain an appreciation of the providence of God amid personal traumas.

Crisis Counseling: Definition

At certain stages in life, many individuals experience some type of crisis. It isn't easy to find someone who hasn't been through one kind of challenge or the other in life. It is inevitable considering we are living in a fallen world.

Defining the term "crisis."

A crisis is defined as a situation or event in which a person feels overwhelmed or has difficulty coping. A crisis is stated to be a dramatic emotional or circumstantial upheaval in a person's life.

A crisis is a situation or a turning point in a person's life that severely destabilizes and interferes with their mental or physical health. The loss of a family member, loss of a job could result in significant financial challenges, and other problems. During such times, people experience a wide range of feelings, and each person's response to a crisis is different. It is normal to feel frightened, anxious, or depressed at such a time. Examples of extreme emergencies cases include domestic violence, rape, suicidal thoughts, threats to harm others, etc.

The Role of Christ-Centered or Biblical Crisis Counselors

As a Biblical Crisis Counselor, your role is overly critical to your counselee's overall wellness. The counselor's job will be to support the counselee in a state of emotional turmoil or mental health crisis, or predicament. The Christ-Centered crisis counselor's objective is to guide them through the Holy Spirit's intervention to a stable place. The counselor becomes an advocate for the counselee, i.e., connecting them with social and community services, including finding temporary shelter, a bible-believing church to connect with, locating loved ones, even helping with therapeutic benefits.

Obtaining Training in Crisis Counseling

To become a Biblical Crisis Counselor working within a ministry setting, an individual will undergo specialized training. A bachelor's degree in a field like psychology, social work, or counseling may be required to work as a crisis counselor in secular settings. Specialized training may include recognizing how and when to call law enforcement or other first responders and how to develop a crisis response team in a church setting. The training will also cover how to establish boundaries, dealing with cultural differences, and the ethical practices all crisis counselors need to follow.

You will often find Pastors, Biblical Counselors, and Professional Counselors counseling people in crisis. However, if you have a passion or believe you are gifted in ministering to those specifically in crisis situations, I will highly recommend you consider undergoing specialized training to appropriately equip yourself with the tools, skills, and strategies needed to help these individuals.

The Skills Every Biblical/Christ-Centered Crisis Counselor Should Have

In addition to specialized training and/or obtaining an undergraduate degree, there are essential skills and traits a biblical crisis counselor must possess:

1. The individual must be a born again Christian and a Disciple.
2. The individual must be empathetic and compassionate - Empathy is the ability to understand and share in another person's emotions and feelings.

3. The individual must be respectful and understanding – Showing respect involves communicating to others that they are of value. This is crucial since people in crisis often have low self-worth.
4. The individual must possess good verbal and written skills.
5. The individual must apply scripture/biblical text to the conversation. The Bible is full of great examples and applicable events you can share. However, one must also stay focused on the individual's issue as they share scripture.
6. The individual must have excellent customer service skills. Your initial conversation and approach makes a lot of difference. It determines how the rest of the conversation and possible meetings will go.
7. The individual helps guide the counselee to the right resources. The crisis counselor should frequently refer the counselee to additional resources. Always keep in mind that there are relevant and helpful resources that can impact the counselee's life in addition to your counsel.
8. The individual must be a good listener - Good listening skills involve been intentional about hearing what the speaker (the counselee) is saying to you. You must listen to what they are saying and also what they are NOT saying through verbal and non-verbal body language.

Crisis Intervention - How to Help People in a Crisis

Now that you know the definition of crisis, the skills to possess, how do I now intercede for my counselees in trouble? Let us find out:

First of all,

What is Crisis Intervention?

Crisis intervention is an immediate and short-term emergency response to mental, emotional, physical, and behavioral distress. Crisis interventions help to restore an individual's equilibrium to their biopsychosocial functioning and minimize the potential for long term distress.

Unlike psychotherapy, crisis counseling is very brief and usually lasts anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. The idea behind crisis counseling is to help people focus on the stressful situation, treat their immediate needs, and teach them coping skills to handle similar situations in the future. Crisis counselors do not replace long-term therapy options. Instead, they help their clients or counselees deal with the immediate effects of a crisis.

What Types of Crises Occur in People's Lives That Requires Intervention?

Suicidal Ideations and attempts, physical abuse, rape, domestic violence, threats to harm others, and more are all types of crises that people encounter. As mentioned earlier in the study, situations like loss of a loved one, job loss, addictions, rape, financial difficulty, sickness, loss of home, and also global pandemic, e.g., COVID-19, can all result in a certain level of crisis emergency in a person's life.

How Can You Help Those Who Experience These Types of Sufferings/ Distress?

As a Christ-centered/Biblical Crisis Counselor, there are some ways that you can support individuals who are facing one crisis or the other in their lives. Let us take a look at a few of them.

- **Praying For Godly Wisdom** – It is vital to seek the Lord for divine wisdom before meeting with your counselees. These individuals are in a vulnerable state/position, and therefore you must be careful what you say. Ask the Lord through His Holy Spirit to grant you the wisdom, empathy, and thoughtfulness (sensitivity) to be able to care for your counselees. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding has all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever." Psalm 111:10. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him." James 1:5 NKJV.
- **Allow Them to Grieve** – Yes, this is crucial to the healing process. Allow your counselees to grieve, to lament, to mourn for what they have lost or have passed through. Let them know it is okay and normal to be fearful of what lies ahead, be angry but sin not, is confused, and be sad. "A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance." Ecclesiastes 3:4 NLT, "Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." Romans 12:15 NKJV.
- **Avoid Judgementalism** – The Word of God warns us not to judge others. Be careful when you minister to your counselee that you do not end up passing

judgment on them. Do not be in haste to assume that they caused their own problems. Your session must be a no-judgment zone, where they are comfortable (at ease) to share what is on their mind and heart without feeling condemned. Leave the judging to the Lord God. "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you." Matthew 7:1-2 NKJV.

- **Be Apologetic** – For the counselee to feel your empathy for them, let them hear your apology. Tell counselees how sorry you are for their plight. Saying I'm so sorry that you are going through this ordeal opens the door for them to hear what you have to say and how you can help them. It shows you are human, and even though you may not understand what they are going through, you empathize with them and are willing to be there. "All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us." 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NLT.
- **Finding a New Normal** – This is the period where you gradually begin to guide your counselee into accepting a new reality, a new normal. Help them comprehend the reality of their situation. Help them see that by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, they can begin a new season of life after the loss of that loved one, loss of their home, properties, an abusive relationship, life after drugs, etc. Encourage your counselees to depend entirely on the Lord, God, family, and community support to see them through times when they lack the strength and ability needed to move forward. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7 NKJV.
- **Refer to Spiritual Leader/Mentor** - As your counselee begins to feel healthier, experiencing hope in the Lord, it is time to now hand them back over to their Pastor, Spiritual Mentor/Leader for discipleship, mentoring, and continuous growth. You can always remain as a resource, making yourself available to them when needed.

Examples of Scripture Showing Periods of Crises in The Lives of God's People

1. *Job* – We all know the story of Job – He is probably one of the best examples of a person who faced a severe crisis in his life. He lost his health, children, properties, and everything he practically owned. He experienced tremendous physical and mental suffering. See the whole book of Job and James 5:10-11.
2. *Samson* – This influential and physically strong servant of God experienced great despair at the end of his life due to his wrong choices. He was still used mightily by God in the end. See the book of Judges Chapters 13 through 16.
3. *The Children of Israel* – The people of Israel faced numerous significant challenges while they were in Egypt and eventually while on their way to the promised land. They faced captivity more than one and multiple tribulations and some of their own doing. See the book of Exodus 2:23, 6:5-6, Joshua 24:17, Psalm 106:39-43.
4. *Apostle Paul* – The Apostle Paul was another servant of God who experiences much suffering in His life due to the Kingdom's work. See 2 Corinthians 11:21-33, Acts 21 through Acts 28.
5. *Jesus Christ* – Finally, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who knew what turmoil, sufferings, and pains felt like. He experienced a crisis in His life from the moment Garden of Gethsemane until his final moments on the Cross of Calvary. During the night at the Mount of Olives, Jesus talks to his Father in great anguish to finally break out of his crisis in his decision to trust: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." Matthew 26:39. The thing about Jesus' crisis is that, unlike others, it led to a new life, a new beginning for all humankind who believed in Him. All those who believed and accepted Him as their Lord and Savior became a new creature and were automatically inducted into the eternal household of God.

In Conclusion:

Christ-Centered/Biblical Crisis Counseling and Intervention is exceptionally essential for believers who are not only struggling with life's issues but drowning in them. The crisis counselor needs to come alongside them lovingly and compassionately to help deliver them from the oppression of the enemy of their souls, satan. The enemy's only job is to steal, kill, and destroy. He is ready to destroy believers physically, spiritually, and emotionally. We cannot allow that because God has a great plan for each of us. As a counselor, you must always remember that the Holy Spirit is the one who empowers and guide you in your relationship with each counselee. You can't do anything with your strength and power. You may have all the education, training, experience, and all. Without the intervention of the Holy Spirit, all is in vain.

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