Book Review

Crisis Intervention: Building Resilience in Troubled Times

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L. G. Echterling, J. H. Presbury, & J. Edson McKee (2018)

Crisis Intervention: Building Resilience and Resolution in Troubled Times

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Echterling, Presbury, and McKee (2018) share their vast knowledge of crisis theory and intervention in *Crisis Intervention: Building Resilience in Troubled Times*.

This book provides a comprehensive and empowering view of crisis intervention – including suicidal crisis intervention – for practitioners and students hoping to expand their skills and knowledge in these important areas. The language and flexibility of this book make it applicable across multiple practice domains. This book could serve as an effective resource for health professionals, social workers, emergency service personnel, and more. One of the book's biggest feats is its optimistic and empowering view of crisis that hints at aspects of recovery.

While crisis situations, including suicidal crises, may elicit feelings of unease or danger, historically, crisis was not seen as a wholly unfortunate event resulting in negative circumstances. The authors outline this in Chapter 1 in which they discuss historical accounts where crisis was seen as an opportunity. The authors guide readers on a journey through relevant theories with a discussion of the classic crisis giants including Erikson, Lindemann, and Caplan. Following this discussion, to highlight the positive and opportunistic side of crisis, the authors transition to a discussion of resilience and introduce the idea of surviving and thriving (pp. 18–20). The chapter concludes with a section on looking for the survivor with resilience-based underpinnings. Chapter 2 discusses change and the factors that contribute to successful crisis interventions. The authors use case study examples to help readers understand how positive resolutions are promoted during times of crisis. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on forming a therapeutic rapport and the importance of making meaningful contact with those experiencing a crisis. Chapter 4 eloquently

weaves narrative theory and constructivism into the discussion in a way that is clear and familiar to readers. The implications of various emotions and feelings are outlined in Chapter 6. This discussion is not limited to negative emotions; the authors return to an optimistic section on positive emotions including courage, hope, and compassion. Similarly hopeful undertones are found throughout Chapters 5 and 6.

The latter half of the book describes specific interventions for specific populations. In Chapter 7, crisis interventions for individuals are discussed. The most compelling section of this chapter is the broad overview of suicide, an issue that clearly warrants attention. The estimated number of suicides in the United States in 2013 was 41,149, an average of about one person every 12.8 min (Doherty & DeVlyder, 2016). The authors provide important contextual factors in suicide and outline situational factors, relevant demographic information, and risk and strength assessments. This chapter includes a discussion of preventing suicide and promoting resilience in addition to various suicide prevention resources. Chapter 8 concerns crisis intervention with couples and families and resolving conflict among relatives. This chapter is brief but includes a narrative example of a familial crisis allowing readers to better contextualize the issue. Crisis intervention with groups is the focus of Chapter 9. The focus is collaborative and goal-oriented and includes discussion of linking people in crisis and facilitating group coping (p. 254). The chapter describes various sources of support including mental health centers, relatives, physicians, teachers, and faith leaders. Chapter 10 discusses community interventions including disasters, catastrophes, and mass violence. Personal and community crises

are defined and key aspects of resilience are weaved throughout the text.

This book is a practical and effective guide for individuals hoping to increase their knowledge of crisis intervention at multiple levels of practice. Contemporary models of crisis are effectively used throughout the book and provide readers with tools to navigate a crisis (e.g., Lazarus's multi-model perspective [2006]). Readers have the opportunity to test their knowledge and reflect on their understanding with a variety of tools and practice activities. Also included throughout, are crisis stories that offer narratives inspired by real-life experiences and brain bites that incorporate aspects of neuroscience.

I was surprised at the paucity of mental health discussion in this book. Despite contemporary literature illustrating the potential for crisis among this population, the book is relatively devoid of mental health considerations. The authors come close when they approach the topic of suicide, but they leave much to be considered. Major depression is a major risk factor for suicide and accounts for up to 60% of suicides (Ng, How, & Ng, 2017; Reeves, 2015). Furthermore, suicide is a major cause of death among those diagnosed with schizophrenia and has historically been referred to as the most serious of symptoms (Carlborg, Winnerbäck, Jönsson, Jokinen, & Nordström, 2010). I also wish to caution readers to know when and how to use skills appropriately during a crisis. For example, building on Egan's (2013) work, the authors include leaning forward as a skill; however, this may be less appropriate than maintaining distance in certain instances. The most important critique I have of this book is some of the language used. For example, "killing yourself" (p. 197) and "kill themselves" (p. 192) could be replaced with "die by suicide," which is supported throughout the literature. A further example is a mention of preparing for crisis intervention with a "suicidal person" (p. 11). This could be changed to "a person experiencing suicidal ideation" thus avoiding any individualization of the problem. It is particularly important to be critical of language especially where it could be damaging and stigmatizing to certain individuals.

Overall, I would recommend this book to professionals in multiple practice domains who are looking to increase their understanding of crisis, particularly crisis experienced in the context of thoughts of suicide. The book uses various educational tools to facilitate learning and is successful in maintaining the reader's attention. While I have offered some critical commentary, I found this book to be practical and straightforward making it easy to apply in the field. Despite some of the language used, the book provides a positive overview of crisis and survivors of crisis, and the majority of sections end with hopeful undertones challenging beliefs that crises are largely negative experiences. This book advances the contemporary literature concerning crisis.

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