



Connecting the dots during crisis calls...responding to survivors' needs for safety, information and resources

Housekeeping Notes

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- Can you hear me now? If yes, please raise your hand.
- Technical problems (viewing, listening, etc.)?
 - Contact Global Customer Support at 1-800-263-6317 or <http://support.gotomeeting.com>
 - Try dialing-in for audio rather than listening via your computer
- Questions or comments during the webinar:
 - Use the question box to type a question/comment for the presenters
- Slides and an evaluation will be emailed to you at end of the webinar.



Thanks:

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- **Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council**

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- **National Domestic Violence Hotline (NDVH)**

Training content adapted from NDVH materials



Learning Objectives

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- Clarify the purpose and impact of domestic violence hotline and crisis calls
- Clarify role of advocate during a crisis call
- Provide guiding principles and core values for responding to crisis calls
- Explore strategies for providing information and safety planning during challenging crisis calls.



Poll Question

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WHAT'S YOUR ROLE AT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Crisis Call Role Play

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7:30 PM on a Friday

Crisis Line Advocate: Hi this is Christy, how can I help you?

Caller: Um...I need to get a restraining order against my husband. Someone told me you guys help with those.

Crisis Line Advocate: Yes our legal advocate can help you apply for a temporary protective order but you can't get those after hours when the courts are closed. You'll have to wait until Monday.

Caller: Oh.....I didn't even think about that. (sigh) I guess I can wait until Monday then.

Crisis Line Advocate: Would you like me to transfer you to the voicemail of our legal advocate so that she can call you first thing Monday morning?

Caller: Yeah, that would be good.

Crisis Line Advocate: Is there anything else I can help you with today?

Caller: No, that's really all I needed.

Crisis Line Advocate: OK, let me transfer you to the legal advocate's voicemail right now.

Caller: Ok thanks.

Crisis Line Advocate: You're welcome. Bye.

Tip of the Iceberg



What information lies beneath the surface?

What the Advocate Didn't Uncover...

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- Her husband has a history of hitting her. He recently slapped her across the face during an argument.
- She moved out two weeks ago and is staying with a friend.
- He has a history of threatening to kill himself.
- He is texting her repeatedly especially more now that she moved out.
- He owns a gun.



Hotline Basics

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- The purpose of the hotline is to provide the caller with compassionate support, crisis intervention, and information that may help them find safety and live lives free of abuse.
- Every caller is different; they may identify as a victim or not; they may be a batterer; they may be a family member.
- Might be slightly questioning something in their relationship OR in need of immediate assistance OR anywhere in between.



Unique Opportunity for Intervention

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- You may be the first person she has talked to about the abuse.
- She's often calling you at a pivotal moment in her life.
- The crisis line is the gateway to your other services. She may be unaware of everything you do. You lay out the welcome mat for her to call back for other services.
- You are probably the one person with most helpful information...



What makes you so special is what you have to offer

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- Emotional support
- Anonymity and confidentiality
- Education—dynamics, red flags, etc.
- Information about other available services
- Safety planning and risk assessment
- Connection to resources and referrals
- Likely outcomes, pros and cons of certain options
- Language access



Build Trust/Develop Rapport

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- Welcome the caller with a helpful, warm and friendly tone.
- Reassure the caller the call is confidential & anonymous.
- Treat the caller with dignity and respect.
- Offer the caller space to share their experiences and needs by asking open-ended questions and validating feelings.



Listen Actively and Empathetically

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- Minimize distractions and increase your ability to be completely present for the caller.
- Give the caller the time that s/he needs to talk while indicating that you're listening by asking clarifying questions, offering validation, and using minimal encouragers.
- Reflect what you're hearing the caller express as his/her primary needs, feelings, and experiences.



Promote Caller's Self Determination

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- Be patient and non-judgmental as the caller identifies needs and options.
- Support the caller's decisions and help identify potential outcomes.
- Understand where the caller may be in his/her process of change and what types of next steps they might be ready to take.
- Validate caller's strengths and progress made.
- Understand how caller's cultural background and experiences may inform their choices and options



Make the Caller's Safety a Priority

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- Listen for and acknowledge red flags of potentially dangerous and/or lethal batterer behaviors or threats in the caller's situation.
- Develop a safety plan with your caller tailored to your caller's individualized needs to minimize risks in their specific situation.
- Strategize around ways to increase emotional/psychological well-being, as well as physical and sexual safety.
- Explore risks and benefits of options available to the caller, and as appropriate, help the caller access local service systems, advocating on her/his behalf when necessary.



Balance Your Needs with Those of the Caller

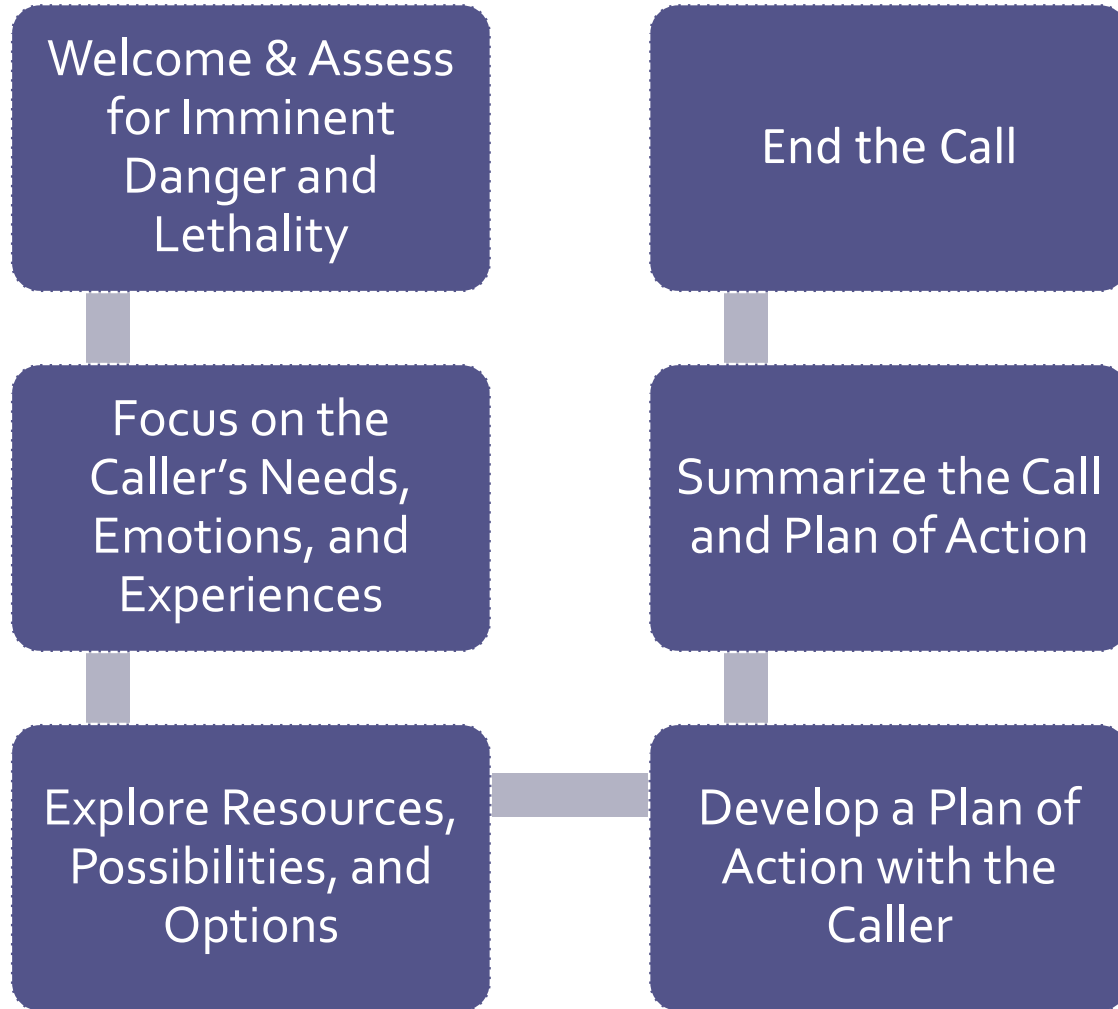
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- Take the time to process difficult calls.
- Use your fellow advocates for support.
- Regularly assess your emotional state and problem solve with your supervisor.
- Take breaks regularly.
- Develop and maintain a plan for your personal wellness.



Crisis Intervention Model for Hotline Calls

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Welcome and Assess for Imminent Danger and Lethality

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Objectives at this stage:

- Use kind & compassionate tone.
- Assess immediate safety from partner, harming themselves or others and need for medical attention.
- Inform caller we're confidential and anonymous.
- Indicate that you're available to help the caller.
- Start the conversation with open-ended questions and broad statements that invite the caller to share her/his story.
- Assess caller's age, gender and ethnicity.

May sound like:

- *Thanks for calling. How can I help you?*
- *Are you safe to talk/chat right now? Are there weapons in the home? Are you thinking about suicide? Do you need medical attention?*
- *We're completely confidential and anonymous.*
- *I'm glad you called today.*
- *I can share some information that might be helpful for you.*
- *Tell me a little bit about why you decided to call today.*
- *It can be helpful to know some information about your background so that I can provide you with the most helpful information and resources. Would you mind sharing your age, gender, race/ethnicity with me?*

Focus on Caller's Needs, Emotions & Experiences

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Objectives at this stage:

- Through reflective listening, identify concerns as seen by the caller.
- Validate caller's needs, emotions and experiences.
- Acknowledge impact on the caller of the abuse s/he's endured or other hardships before moving into problem-solving.
- Help caller identify priorities and needs using strategic questions.

May sound like:

- *From what you've shared with me, it sounds like you're most concerned about...Is that right?*
- *It's perfectly natural to feel afraid/angry/frustrated.*
- *It must have been terrifying when your partner pushed you.*
- *Do you need a safe place to take your kids?*
- *What do you see as your greatest need right now?*
- *How would you like this situation to turn out?*

Explore Resources, Possibilities and Options

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Objectives at this stage:

- Assess what caller has tried in past and what resources s/he thinks s/he has available to her/him.
- Provide information about resources and options the caller might not be aware of; include personal and community resources.
- Share education re: dynamics of domestic violence and your understanding of caller's situation; help caller assess advantages, disadvantages and potential risks of options.
- Offer possible strategies for increasing safety.

May sound like:

- *Can you tell me a little bit about what strategies you've tried to keep yourself safe?*
- *Do you have friends or family members who have been supportive to you? Or neighbors that you trust?*
- *What have you thought about doing at this point?*
- *I can share information with you about different options.*
- *What we know about domestic violence is that leaving can be the most dangerous time. Has your partner made threats to you?*

Develop Plan of Action with Caller

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Objectives at this stage:

Working with your caller and considering where s/he is in her/his process of change:

- Discuss perceived risks and engage caller in developing strategies to increase physical and emotional safety.
- Base safety plan on what caller identifies as primary needs and what caller is willing and able to do.
- Assist caller in thinking about next steps and timeline.

May sound like:

- *You don't have to take any steps you feel uncertain of, but I can help you think about what might be best right now.*
- *For you to achieve [previously discussed outcome] what resources would you need?*
- *You're making some really great steps just talking about this with me today. I want you to know there may also be local programs that can help you. Sometimes it takes multiple agencies and supports to meet all your needs.*
- *If your partner's violence begins to escalate, what will you do to be safe?*

Summarize the Call and Plan of Action

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Objectives at this stage:

Highlight key components of the call and reflect what decisions caller has made during the call:

- Summarize key points with caller.
- Acknowledge steps made.
- Offer encouragement for plan of action.

*Refer to Disengagement Handout for more information.

May sound like:

- *We've discussed how to make your safety a priority and some of the options and resources that are available to you.*
- *I know it took a lot of courage to call us today and talk about everything that's been happening to you.*
- *I encourage you to try those numbers I gave to you.*
- *I hope you'll try some of the self-care steps we talked about.*

End the Call

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Objectives at this stage:

- Provide caller with contact information for any resources discussed during the call.
- If statistical information has not been provided during the call, politely ask caller for her/his demographic information.
- Inform the caller that your program is always available as a resource and encourage her/him to call back if more help is needed.

May sound like:

- *The program we discussed is called _____ and their number is 555-5555. When you speak to them, you might want to ask about meeting with a counselor/legal advocate/etc.*
- *Before you go, would you mind if I ask you a few questions for our caller statistics? Would you mind telling me your age and race? And how did you hear about the Hotline?*
- *We're available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Please call back if you need more support.*

Challenges to Crisis Calls

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- Don't mention anything about abuse or violence.
- Focused on a specific need/question; uninterested in other information; seem to be in a hurry.
- Asking for services we can't provide.
- Distractions from other job responsibilities while answering the crisis line.
- Have other calls waiting.



What you might say:

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- *While I'm looking that phone number up can I just tell you that leaving an abusive relationship can be the most dangerous time. Have you thought about how you'll stay safe?*
- *I'm happy to help you with that but I'm just curious, what else is going on today that led you to call us?*
- *We're here 24/7. You can always call us back later when you have more time to talk.*
- *No I'm sorry we can't _____ (pay your rent, pay for your attorney, provide you with shelter, etc.) but here's what we can do that might be helpful.*
- *If you don't get what you need from the referrals I gave or if need anything else, please call us back.*



Other Factors for Successful Crisis Calls

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- Supportive Environment
 - Physical environment and logistics:
 - ✦ Minimizes distractions and interruptions
 - ✦ Provides easy access to resources and important information
 - ✦ Realistically balances workload and call volume
 - Encouraged to regularly debrief with supervisor/co-workers
 - Helpful feedback, guidance from supervisor/co-workers
- Self-care
 - Burnout often interferes with active and compassionate listening
 - Be aware of how your body and mind are impacted by the work
 - Have a plan for taking care of your self
 - Contact GCADV for self-care resources



Thank You!



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