Part I
Crisis Intervention Theory and Application

Chapter 1
Approaching Crisis Intervention

Definition of Crisis
- Perception or experiencing of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that exceeds the person’s current resources and coping mechanisms.
- Leads to severe affective, behavioral, and cognitive malfunctioning.

Characteristics of Crisis
- Presence of Danger and Opportunity
- Complicated Symptomatology
- Seeds of Growth and Change
- No panaceas or quick fixes
- The necessity of choice
- Universality and idiosyncrasy
Applied Crisis Domains

- Developmental Crisis
- Situational Crisis
- Existential Crisis
- Environmental Crisis

Transcrisis

- Crisis is time limited
- Transcrisis is an emotional roller coaster state in which there is recovery followed by relapse after a precipitating event
- Transcrisis points: part of a transcrisis where person comes to grips with a new developmental stages or other dimensions of the problem.

Theories of Crisis and Crisis Intervention

- Basic crisis theory
- Expanded crisis theory
- Applied crisis theory
Theories of Crisis and Crisis Intervention

Basic Crisis Theory
- Lindemann
  - constructs revolved grief and loss
  - Used an equilibrium paradigm
- Caplan
  - Impediments to life goals that cannot be overcome through customary behaviors

Theories of Crisis and Crisis Intervention
- Expanded Crisis Theory
  - Psychoanalytic Theory
  - Systems Theory
  - Adaptational Theory
  - Interpersonal theory
  - Chaos Theory

Theories of Crisis and Crisis Intervention

Psychoanalytic Theory
- Disequilibrium that accompanies a person’s crisis can be understood through gaining access to the individual’s unconscious thoughts and past emotional experiences.
- An early childhood fixation can explain why an event becomes a crisis.
**Theories of Crisis and Crisis Intervention**

**Systems Theory**
- Adopts an interpersonal systems way of thinking as opposed to what is going on only within the client.
- There is a focus on the interrelationships and interdependence among people and between people and events.

**Adaptational Theory**
- Crisis is seen as being sustained through maladaptive behaviors, negative thoughts, and destructive defense mechanisms.
- Crisis is resolved when maladaptive coping behaviors are changed to adaptive behaviors.

**Interpersonal Theory**
- People cannot sustain a personal state of crisis if they believe in themselves and in others and have confidence that they can become self-actualized and overcome the crisis.
- Return the power of self-evaluation to the person.
Theories of Crisis and Crisis Intervention

Chaos Theory
- Chaos is the result of overwhelming anxiety
- Crisis: chaos becomes self-organizing and client is unable to identify patterns or preplan options to solve dilemmas at hand.
- Experimentation: Trial and error, false starts, dead ends to make sense of and cope with crisis

Crisis Intervention Models
- The Equilibrium Model
- The Cognitive Model
- The Psychosocial Transition Model

Eclectic Crisis Intervention Theory
Integration of concepts and strategies from all available approaches to help clients.
- Major Tasks
  - Identify valid elements in all systems and integrate them into an internally consistent whole
  - Consider all pertinent theories, methods and standards
  - Keep an open mind
Characteristics of Effective Crisis Workers

- Life Experiences
- Poise
- Creativity and Flexibility
- Multicultural Competency
- Energy and Resiliency
- Quick Mental Reflexes
- Growth Potential