



McMaster Divinity College

MS 3XA3

Crisis Intervention

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Spring 2020
May 2nd, May 9th, June 6th
9:00am to 4:30pm

COURSE SYLLABUS

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Any direct service ministerial role will at some point usually involve helping people deal with life crises. We are also in the midst of a global pandemic, that has created a multitude of This course will equip pastors, lay leaders, and pastoral counselors with basic level skills in crisis intervention with individuals, couples, families, and organizations. General crisis intervention theory and principles will be reviewed along with approaches to specific situations such as acute depression with suicidal intention, violent and aggressive behavior, psychotic decompensation, developmental crises, spiritual crises, catastrophic life events, and natural/technological disasters. In the process of the course, students will formulate a summary for one special focus crisis area of interest, including a concrete plan of assessment, intervention and follow-up, which is informed by current theory and research. Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will exchange their work and collect a library of summaries on the most commonly encountered crisis situations, as ready reference to principles, resources and referrals for these topics.

Prerequisites: While previous coursework or experience in general counselling skills is preferred, it is not mandatory to benefit from this training. However, if no previous coursework or experience, students must read Chapters 1 through 3 inclusive of the textbook by Norman H. Wright prior to the first class, in addition to the course readings below due before the first class.

SPECIALIZATIONS: Counseling and Spiritual Care, Church and Culture, Christian World View,

Doctor of Practical Theology students who wish to apply for this course as an Advanced Elective for their degree program must consult with the Program Director of the DPT and the course instructor in order to develop an Advanced Elective approach to the course that fulfills the specific elements required by the DPT program. Once the elements of the Advanced Elective have been agreed upon by the student, the Program Director, and the instructor, a formal application can be made for an Advanced Elective in connection with this course. Once the application is accepted, DPT students can proceed with the course as part of their degree program.

2. COURSE FORMAT

This intensive course is offered in live, online videoconference format, scheduled on 3 full days of instruction. Class sessions will include didactic instruction, video presentations, group presentations, role play, and class discussion. Since this is a skills-development course, full participation in each of the three class days is required, and because of the intensive format of this course, readings must be completed before class, including the first day of class. Group presentations will require students to videochat and collaborate during the 4 weeks between the 2nd and 3rd class. Group presentations during the 3rd class will be made online. By the end of the course, each student will have summaries from the instructor and fellow students on a variety of specific crisis situations to build their own “Crisis Intervention” handbook and reference library.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Since this is a skills-development course, the learning objectives for each specialization are the same.

Knowing

- To understand the goals, phases, and techniques of crisis intervention in general
- To understand the how these goals, phases, and techniques are adapted uniquely to specific types of crises, including suicide, violent or potentially violent incidents, developmental crises, and other adventitious crises, such as natural or man-made disasters and the current pandemic crisis, as well as how these are adapted to specific populations
- To understand the symptoms and adaptations commonly experienced in response to trauma
- To understand the unique opportunity and dangers in providing crisis intervention in a pastoral role
- To understand the unique challenges and adaptations involved in doing crisis counselling online or over the phone
- To understand the unique role of the church in providing early intervention during crises

Being

- To identify the life crises which we have survived, and the adaptations to these crises that have affected our lives
- To increase tolerance in hearing others’ pain and being open to the experience of one’s own pain.
- To increasingly practice empathic listening skills, effective responses, and appropriate support in all our relationships, especially when these have been affected by crisis and trauma

Doing

- To observe and identify helpful versus non helpful responses in crisis situations
- To develop skills in assessing, intervening, and follow-up in different types of crises, with different populations, and in different contexts
- To develop skills in identifying the need for and facilitating referrals for further psychological and medical help when necessary
- To identify resources within our communities to provide support, education, and further help for individuals in crisis
 - To develop an action plan for facilitating early intervention in crises and/or providing crisis intervention resources within our ministry context or community

4. COURSE TEXTS

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts should be purchased before the first day of class. Please contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

A. *Required Textbooks:*

Wright, H. Norman. (2011). The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling: What To Do and Say When It Matters Most. Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN. (449 pp)

Mason, Karen. (2014). Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Pastors, Chaplains, and Pastoral Counselors. InterVarsity Press: Downer's Grove, IL. (232 pp)

B. *Additional articles:*

To supplement lectures, additional articles are provided on the class website on A2L. An extensive bibliography is also provided to aid students in preparing for their class projects.

5. INSTRUCTOR

Biography: Cathryn Harris, Ph.D. C.Psych. is an Associate Professor at McMaster Divinity College. She is a Registered Psychologist (CPO) with competencies in both Clinical and Counselling Psychology, a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist, and Approved Supervisor in Marriage and Family Therapy with AAMFT and CAMFT, and a Certified EMDR Therapist. For 35 years, and currently fulltime, she has provided psychotherapy and psychological assessments to individuals, couples, families, children and adolescents in outpatient private practice. She has also worked in inpatient and day treatment programs, and provided consultation to pastors, teachers, and business professionals on individual and organizational issues. She has been continuously involved in the training and supervision of Christian mental health professionals for over 30 years, beginning as Adjunct Professor at Rosemead School of Psychology and at Fuller Graduate Seminary for a short while, and for the longest time as Clinical Supervisor for a Christian counselling ministry that placed counselling interns in churches throughout Southern California. It has also been her privilege on a few occasions to provide counselling skills training specifically to Pastors, and enjoys being able to do more of this at MDC. Dr. Harris has been married for over 30 years to another psychologist, and has one adult daughter who has managed to survive that experience.

Contact and Availability: Dr. Harris is available for one-on-one consultation briefly after class and during breaks on the day class is scheduled. Otherwise, students may contact her at drcathrynharris@gmail.com. Please make sure you put "Crisis Intervention course" in the subject line of any email to rapidly identify your communication.

6. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Class Participation - 20% of grade

Attendance, and participation in class discussions, activities and roleplays.

B. Assignments

i. Group Presentation and Written Resource Handout - 50% of grade

Students will form groups of two or three (depending on class size) to produce an online presentation on a unique topic from the list below. This assignment is due during the third/last class on June 6th, so 4 weeks is allowed to prepare the assignment between the 2nd class and when the presentations and handouts are due in the 3rd class. (Presentation length will depend on class size). The **presentation** will be conducted online, and must include some interactive material and/or demonstration: role play, video, class activity, case study for discussion, etc. A partial bibliography is provided online with beginning reference materials for some topics. At least 5 journal articles, chapters, or book references are required.

Groups will prepare a **written handout** for fellow students. This handout and all other written supplementary materials that are part of the presentation must be submitted online through A2L by Friday June 5th at 9am to allow time to upload to A2L for access for all class members. The handout will summarize (use these section headings):

- A. **Introduction** – definition of crisis, statistics, demographics, relevance to Christian or other target community, etc
- B. **Assessment**
- C. **Interventions**
- D. **Follow-up**
- E. **Resources**
- F. **Bibliography and Other Recommended Reading**

Also prepare a **Handout for Counselors** and/or **Outline of a Community Presentation** for bonus points!!

Crisis Topics: (cont. next page)

Abuse and Violence

Sexual Assault

Sexual Abuse of a

Child/Adolescent

Domestic Violence

Physical Abuse of a

Child/Adolescent

Catastrophic Life Events

Accidental Injury/ Chronic Illness/

Terminal Illness

Arrest/Incarceration

Sudden Death/ Suicide/ Homicide

Special Populations and Settings

Families
 Children and Adolescents
 Refugees
 Military
 First Responders
 Prison Population

Developmental/Transitional Crises

Bereavement/ Natural Death
 Marital Separation/Divorce
 Unexpected Pregnancy/ Abortion/
 Miscarriage
 Dementia/ Care of Elderly
 Aging/ Retirement
 Immigration

ii. Individual Paper – 30% of grade

This paper represents the practical application of this course to your current or future ministry role, and fulfills the final objective of the course to develop an action plan for facilitating early intervention for crises and/or providing crisis intervention resources within your ministry context or community. If you do not have currently a specific ministerial role or community, you may use a hypothetical or anticipated one. You can use the material you researched for your group project, or other materials you collected during the course, including from other groups (so long as authorship is clearly cited for original work by another person, and primary references are included in your bibliography as well).

Imagine that you are submitting a proposal to a Church Board or non-profit organization to obtain funding or other support (you don't need to provide a budget, however). The content can be organized in bullet points/ outline form, but must include all relevant content, and should be at least 5-6 pages in length (single spaced within paragraphs, double spaced between paragraphs). The paper is due approximately three weeks after the last class (Sunday, June 28th at midnight).

Your paper should include (use these subheadings):

- A. **Participant Identification:** What is the target population, and description of ministerial context (your role, and the characteristics of the community involved).
- B. **Problem Identification:** Description of need for crisis services and/or identification of how you will identify these needs. (Why)
- C. **Action Plan:** Description of program elements to address the identified needs (Who, where, how, when, what) - (You can include the Participant Handout and/or Presentation outline developed as part of a group project)
- D. **Evaluation Plan:** Description of how you will evaluate outcomes. How will you know your program was successful?
- E. **Referral and Resources List:** List of resources in your specific community and geographical area to which you could refer those in crisis in addition to the needs you have addressed in your proposal.
- F. **Bibliography:** Sources you consulted in formulating your plan, and which will be informative and relevant in carrying it out.

7. COURSE ADMINISTRATION

College Style for Submission of Written Work: All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses

<http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Statement On Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

Gender Inclusive Language: McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

Submission of Written Work:

1. Group Assignment: A digital copy of all written materials must be submitted online through Avenue to Learn by Friday June 5th, 9am, to allow time to upload A2L for access by other class members.

2. Individual Paper: Submit online through Avenue to Learn on class page. Due three weeks after last class, on Sunday June 28th, by midnight. 50% loss in points for late submission.

Cell Phone/Computer Policy: Students are to refrain from texting or conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. Should you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom. The same policy applies to all computer generated sound schemes or other electronic announcement systems.

Copyright: *This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.*

8. COURSE OUTLINE : LECTURES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

(Due on class date indicated)

DAY ONE: Saturday May 2nd

Reading Assignment: Wright, Chapters 7-9, 14-15 (98pp); Mason (184pp)
(For those with no previous training in counseling, please also read Wright, Chs 1-3)**

Lecture Topics:

Crisis Intervention Theory
General Crisis Intervention Principles
Suicide and Acute Depression
Homicidal Ideation and Assaultive Behavior
Psychotic Decompensation

DAY TWO: Saturday May 9th

Reading Assignment: Wright Chapters 4-6, 10-13 (192pp)
Dulmus, C. N., & Hilarski, C. (2003). "*When stress constitutes trauma and trauma constitutes crisis: The stress-trauma-crisis continuum*". (9 pp, on A2L)
Hiltner (1972), "*The Dynamics of Life Crises and Pastoral Care*" (7pp, on A2L)

Lecture Topics:

Understanding the Stress – Loss – Trauma – Crisis – PTSD Continuum
Introduction to Life Event Crises and Bereavement
Eg. Special Focus - Unemployment
Disaster Response and Understanding the Current Pandemic Crisis
Principles and Guidelines for Online and Phone Counselling
Emergency First Aid: Anxiety and Panic Episodes
Helping Organizations and Groups
Critical Incident Stress Debriefing

Friday June 5th 9am: WRITTEN MATERIALS FOR GROUP PROJECTS DUE

DAY THREE: Saturday June 6th GROUP PROJECTS DUE

Reading Assignments:

Wright, Conclusion (pp. 415-432, 18pp.)
Dykstra, Robert C. (1990). "*Intimate Strangers: The Role of the Hospital Chaplain in Situations of Sudden Traumatic Loss.*" (18pp, on A2L)
van Deusen Hunsinger, Deborah. (2011) "*Bearing the Unbearable: Trauma, Gospel and Pastoral Care.*" (18pp, on A2L)
Other articles possibly to be announced, depending on Class interest and trajectory.

DAY THREE: (continued)

Group Presentations

Lecture Topics:

Spiritual Crises

Using Spiritual Resources

Termination and Follow Up

When Hospitalization is Necessary

How to Make Referrals Successful

Sunday June 28th: WRITTEN PAPER DUE