



## McMaster Divinity College

### MS 3XA3/5XA5

### Crisis Intervention

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Spring 2022  
May 7th, May 14<sup>th</sup>, June 4<sup>th</sup>  
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 have also been in the midst of a prolonged global pandemic that has created a multitude of other crises. 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.

**MS 3XA3 - SPECIALIZATIONS:** Counseling and Spiritual Care, Church and Culture, Pastoral Studies,  
**MS 5XA5 – ADVANCED STUDENTS:** MA and Doctoral Students will have extra reading (approx .1000 pages) and an extended individual paper for this course (see below).

## 2. COURSE FORMAT

This intensive course is offered in live, synchronous, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class. Group presentations during the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 student 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](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

##### A. **Required Textbooks – All Students:**

Wright, H. Norman. *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling: What To Do and Say When It Matters Most*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2011. (449 pp)  
 Mason, Karen. *Preventing Suicide: A Handbook for Pastors, Chaplains, and Pastoral Counselors*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014. (232 pp)

##### B. **Additional Required Textbooks – Advanced Students:**

Shane, Thomas W. *Crisis Pastoral Care: A Police Chaplain's Perspective*. Hohm Press: Chino Valley, AZ: Hohm Press, 2011. (224 pp).  
 Jackson-Cherry, Lisa & Erford, Bradley. *Crisis Assessment, Intervention and Prevention (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.)* Pearson: New York City, NY.: Pearson, 2017. (528 pp)

##### C. **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](mailto: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. ALL STUDENTS - 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 4th, so 3 weeks is allowed to prepare the assignment between the 2<sup>nd</sup> class and when the presentations and handouts are due in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 for Group Presentations:**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****SPECIALIZATION STUDENTS: MINISTRY APPLICATION PAPER**

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 for a particular type of crisis. 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 5-8 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. (the WHY)
- C. **Action Plan:** Description of program elements to address the identified needs (WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHAT, HOW) - (You can include the Participant Handout and/or Presentation outline developed as part of your group project, or develop new ones for this topic)
- 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 this kind of crisis, in addition to resources for 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.

### **ADVANCED STUDENTS: COMBINED RESEARCH PAPER and MINISTRY APPLICATION**

Choose a specific topic related to crisis intervention in a ministry context. You should limit your focus to a particular type of crisis with a particular population. Your topic can overlap with your group project, but should represent a more in-depth exploration of the topic and not simply repeat the same work. The topic, thesis and your bibliography must be submitted by the second class on May 14<sup>th</sup> for approval by the professor. The final paper is due Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

- A. **Bibliography:** Your bibliography must represent an additional approximately 200 pages of reading in addition to course texts to fulfill the doctoral requirements of this course. This paper should include approximately 15-20 references in addition to your course texts (and in addition to any sources included in your group project if related), preferably journal articles or book chapters, and include both research on the crisis and population of your topic, as well as *specific* crisis intervention strategies for this kind of crisis.).
- B. **Literature Review (15-20 pages):** Summarize the current information on this topic from your research, including background, relevant epidemiology, relevance to ministry, current research findings and issues, specific crisis intervention approaches, techniques, or concerns. Do not simply repeat general crisis intervention principles, although you should discuss specific interventions in the context of general principles.
- C. **Ministry Application (8-10 pages):** This portion is exactly as described above for specialization students, and should be the application of your literature review to your chosen ministry context for this assignment.

## 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 5<sup>th</sup>, 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 28<sup>th</sup>, 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 7th**

**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)**

**Schedule:**

**Lecture Topics:**

**9am BEGIN**

Introduction to Course & Assignments

Your Role as Crisis Counselor

The Centrality of Relationship and Empathy

9:40 (5 min break)

9:45

Crisis Intervention Theory

10:30 (15 min break)

10:45

General Crisis Intervention Principles

11:25 (5 min break)

11:30

Suicide and Acute Depression – Part 1

**12:15 LUNCH – 45 mins**

1:00

Suicide and Acute Depression – Part 2

1:40 (5 min break)

1:45

Homicidal Ideation and Assaultive Behavior

2:30 (15 min break)

2:45

Psychotic Decompensation

3:25 (5 min break)

3:30

Suicidal Crisis Role Play Prep

3:50

Suicidal Crisis Role Play!

4:10

Debrief, Wrap up, Questions

**4:30 END**

**DAY TWO: Saturday May 14<sup>th</sup>**

**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)

**Schedule:****Lecture Topics:**

<b>9am BEGIN</b>	Understanding the Stress – Loss – Trauma – Crisis – PTSD Continuum
9:40 (5 min break)	
9:45	Introduction to Life Event Crises and Bereavement
10:30 (15 min break)	
10:45	(cont. ) Eg. Special Focus - Unemployment
11:25 (5 min break)	
11:30	Disaster Response & Understanding the Current Pandemic Crisis

**12:15 LUNCH – 45 mins**

1:00	Emergency First Aid: Anxiety and Panic Episodes
1:40 (5 min break)	
1:45	(cont)
2:30 (15 min break)	
2:45	Principles and Guidelines for Online and Phone Counselling
3:25 (5 min break)	
3:30	Helping Organizations and Groups: Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
4:10	Debrief, Wrap up, Questions

**4:30 END**

**Friday June 3<sup>rd</sup> 9am: WRITTEN MATERIALS FOR GROUP PROJECTS DUE**

