

Preventing and Responding to Behavioral Crises

Stacy L. Nonnemacher, Ph.D.

Clinical Director

Office of Developmental Programs



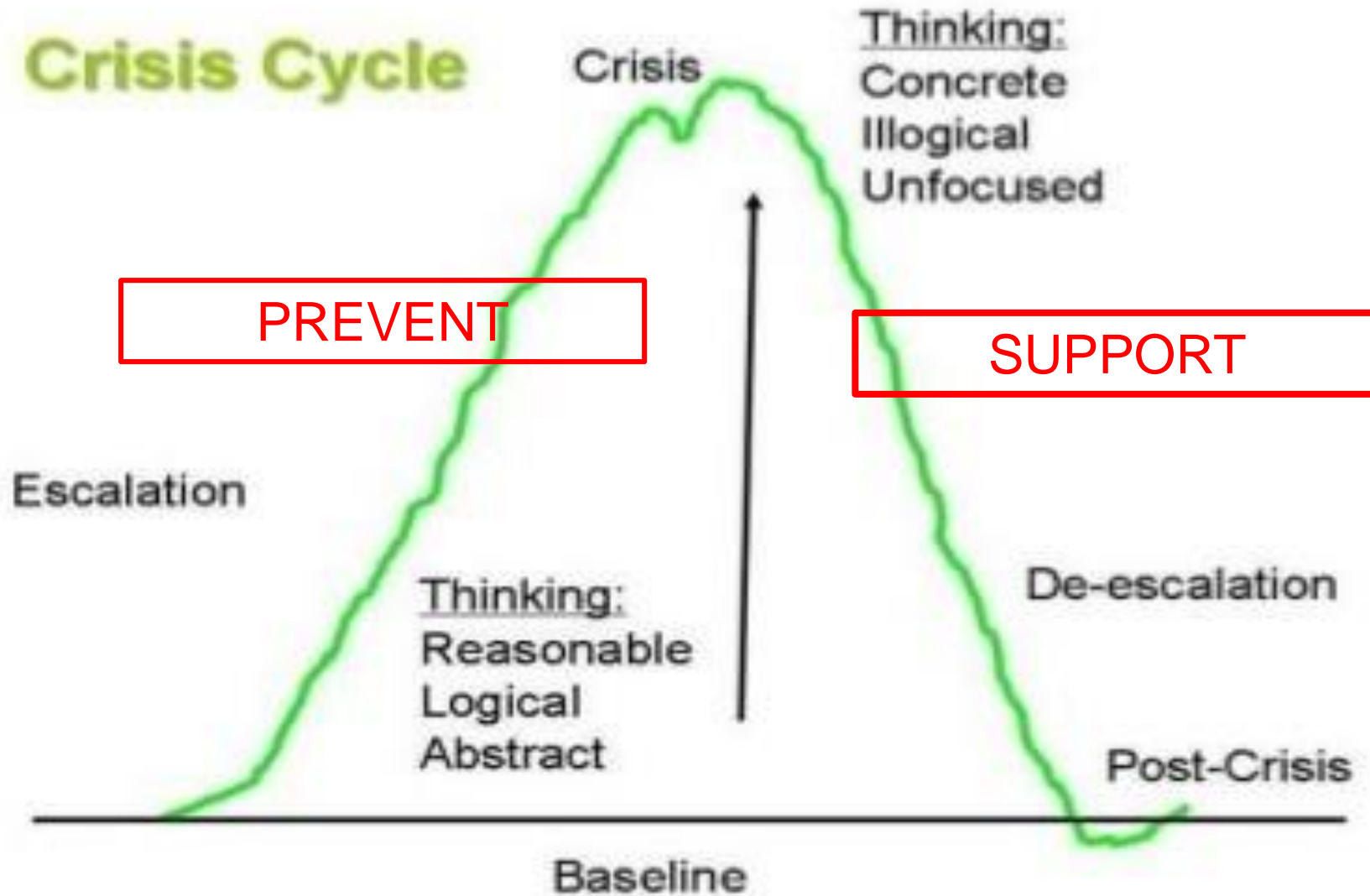
Why are we talking about crises?

For you, me, the people we support and their supporters:

- We have experienced a sudden change in routines and activities
- We may be experiencing heightened anxiety and worry
- We may have a fear of unknown

*It's time to refocus and get creative with how we **prevent** and **support** people through behavioral crises*

Crisis Cycle



▶ For people with BSS and for people without

We all have the potential for a behavioral crisis in times like these. And, we all have good days and bad days.



CONSIDERATIONS

Review Plans

- Review ISP, BSP, CIP and SEEP plan (if applicable)



Review Plans -- Example

Given that you are only able to provide remote supports at this time, does it make sense to work on goals that are not necessarily preferred, but important to a person's daily functioning (e.g., hygiene)?

1. Assess if it makes sense to decrease requests/tasks/demands/etc. in order to make sure individuals make it through this successfully.
2. If things must be done, can you intersperse preferred and non-preferred or can you capitalize on interests and preferences?

Capitalize on Natural Supports

- Assess those people who are currently in the individual's life who can provide a source of mental, emotional, and physical support, as needed.
 - What does support look like for supporters?
 - Remind supporters:
 - Focus on the short term
 - Prioritize quality communication
 - Feeling under pressure and stress is typical reaction, does not mean you cannot do your job or are weak
 - Turn to each other for support
 - Provide resources to supporters on how they can get support
 - Are they connected?
 - [PA Family Network](#)
 - [ASERT Support Group List](#)
 - [MyODP Individual and Family Caregiver Supports](#)
 - Do they know when to reach out for support when needed?



Capitalize on Natural Supports -- Example

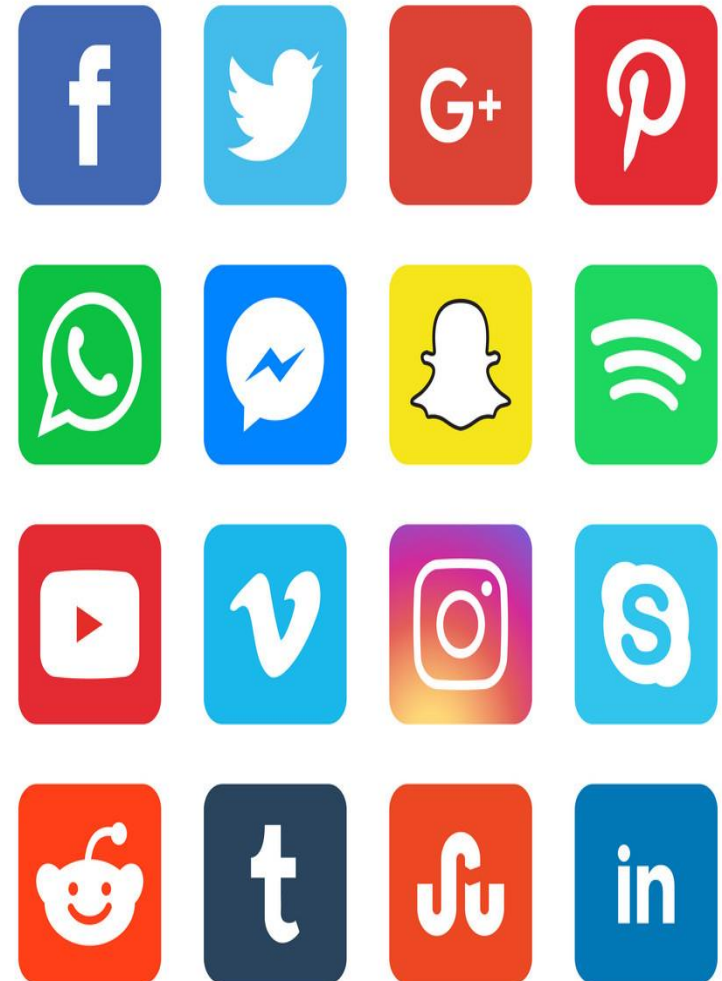
Most of the individuals we support are now home and looking for things to do. They may be bored and finding it difficult to occupy their time and establish new routines and schedules. And, supporters may feel disconnected during this time as they are navigating their own responses to what is happening around them while trying to support the individual.



Supporters know that
too!
Schedule their days

Proactive Outreach

- Provide periodic wellness check ins in an effort to proactively assess and identify needs for additional on site or remote supports
 - Who typically struggles with change and transitions?
 - Does this person tend to need a lot of support meeting basic needs?
 - Does this individual need consistent reminders to practice coping skills?
 - Does the individual need support to navigate information overload?



Proactive Outreach -- Example

When reaching out remotely, it may be difficult to discern if what the individual is experiencing is a typical or atypical response to this time.

Acknowledging biases created by your own response and struggling to ensure that the individual is safe and well.

1. SAMHSA documents help to explain typical reactions as well as when and how to reach out for help and may be a helpful resource to assess someone's needs. Make a daily self-check
2. It may be important to “put eyes” on the individual and supporters
3. Introduce CDC COVID Symptom Tracker

Creative Remote Supports

- Many services in ODP programs are permitted to provide remote supports to individuals and staff during this time. These modifications allow for providers to continue to support participants and DSPs through this challenging time (e.g. to engage in daily check ins, to teach and observe skills, to address new concerns).

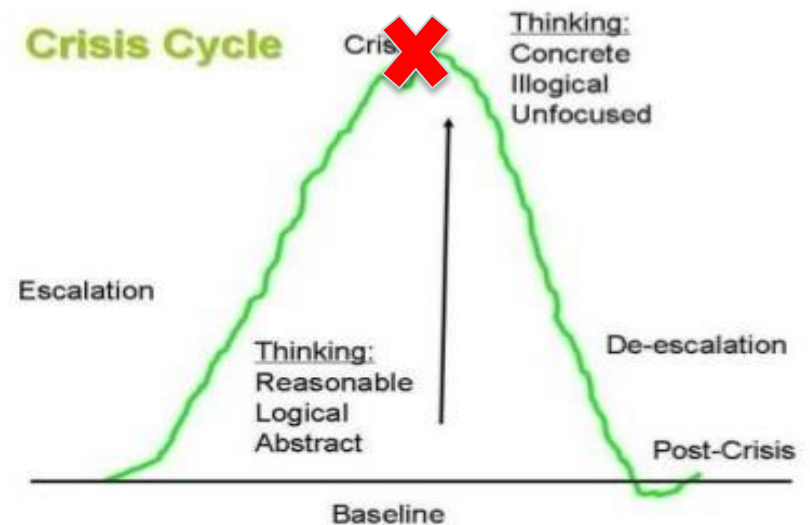
Creative Remote Supports -- Examples

- Do an art class via Zoom
- Watch a movie together on Netflix Party
- Model behaviors like washing hands, cleaning and disinfecting around the house
- Create group, virtual meet ups based on shared interests
- Introduce people to online grocery shopping
- Connect someone to a peer
- Start on ongoing, online discussion
- And do not forget your teams and staff!
 - Do a virtual yoga session together
 - Meet consistently to stay on the same page about supporting an individual

Communicate & Maintain an On Call System

Do supporters know the best time to call for support?

Do supporters understand the intent of using your on-call system?



Communicate & Maintain an On Call System -- Example

These are typical warning signs for crisis for PARTICIPANT



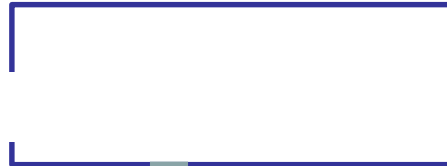
→ Do this



If strategies do not work and you observe:



→ Call



If there is an immediate health and safety concern or/ you cannot reach any of the above, call:



Communicate & Maintain an On Call System -- Example

These are typical warning signs for crisis for PARTICIPANT

- 1.Pacing
- 2.Picking at fingers
- 3.Cursing under his breath



- 1.Ask Joe if he wants to talk and listen if yes
- 2.Ask Joe if he wants to play uno and play if yes.
- 3.If not, follow crisis support strategies located in the BSP. BSP is kept on top of the office desk.

If strategies do not work and you observe:

- Attempts to elope
- Slamming objects
- New and concerning behaviors



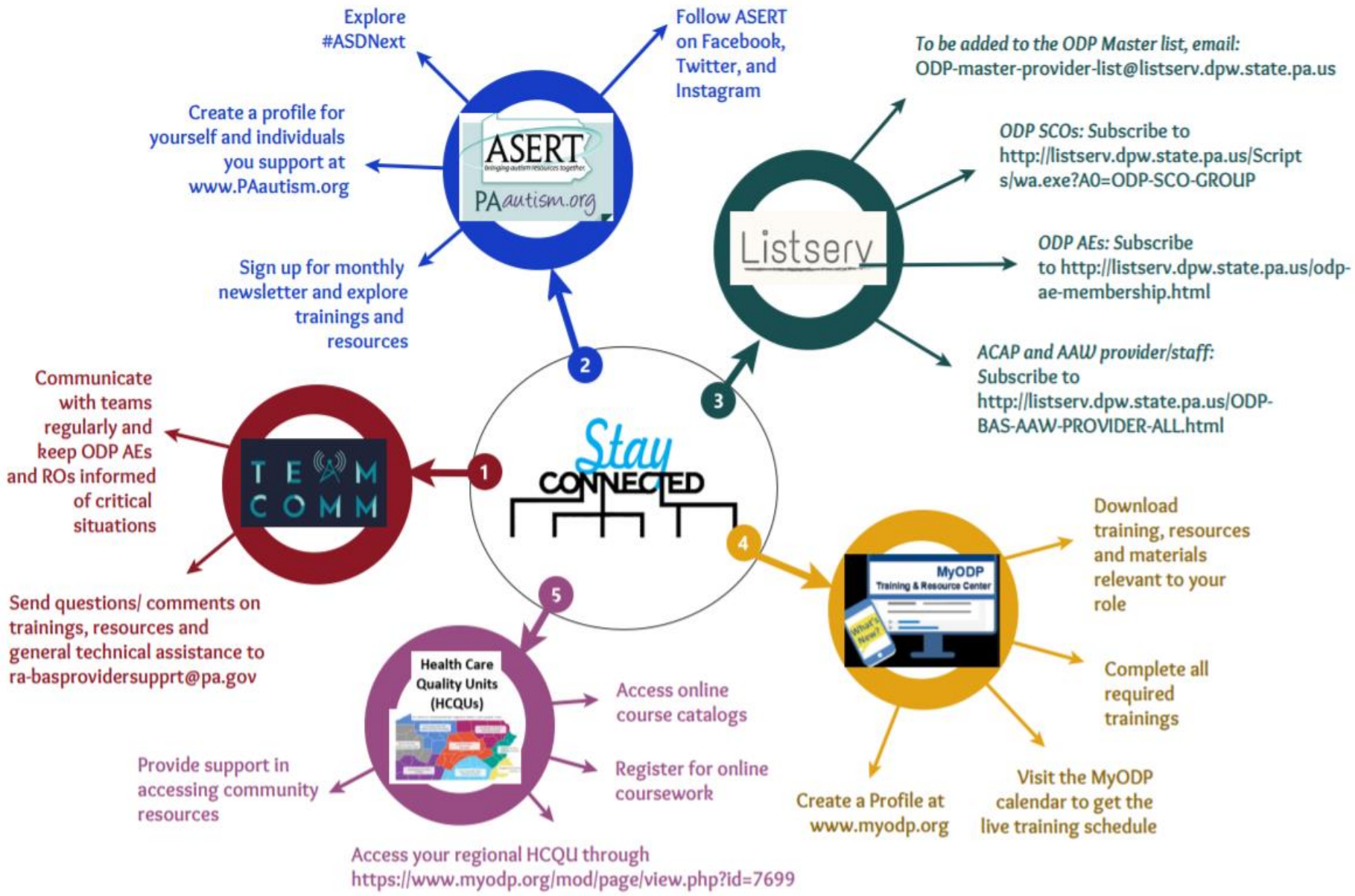
Jen [BSS] (215) 555 – 1234
Mark (215) 555 – 5678
Deborah (717) 555 - 1534



If there is an immediate health and safety concern or/ you cannot reach any of the above, call:

On Call (215) 555-6853
Crisis help line:
(717) 555 - 1020





Statewide Support & Referral Helpline



- Culturally competent
- Skilled at assisting those with ID/A
- Use principles of trauma-informed care to listen, assess needs, triage calls, and provide appropriate referral

The toll-free, round-the-clock support line is officially operational. The number to call is 1-855-284-2494. For TTY, dial 724-631-5600.

4/3/2020