

# Crisis Intervention & De-Escalation

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# Group Norms & Agreements

**Be Present**  
limit interruptions

**Make Space, Take Space**

**Speak from the I perspective**

**No fixing, saving, or correcting**

This is an opportunity for everyone to be in charge of their own learning

**Vegas Rules**

What is learned here leaves here. What is said here stays here.



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# What Will You Learn?

- Define and recognize various types of crisis, including emotional situations and environmental crisis
- Identify early warning signs of potential crisis situations
- Model how to understand a persons needs and how to effectively communicate in a way that is heard

# NAMI Chicago

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Guided by the experiences of those living with mental health conditions and rooted in equity, NAMI Chicago educates to fight stigma and discrimination, fiercely advocates for our community, and shares hope, connection and expertise with people on their mental health journey.



# Wellness Recovery Model: Foundations of Mental Wellness





# Mental Health 101

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# What is Mental Health?

It includes three components:

Our emotional,  
psychological,  
and social well-  
being

How we think,  
feel, and act

Affects how we  
handle stress,  
relate to others,  
and make choices

# Mental Health vs Mental Health Condition

How intense is the emotional/behavioral experience and how is it deviating from my baseline?

**Intensity**



How long has the emotion/behavior been going on for in relation to my baseline?

**Duration**



How is the emotion/behavior impacting my daily living?

**Distress**







**Why does it  
feel like  
we're in a  
mental  
health  
crisis?**

- Increase Awareness
- Pandemic Impact
- Stigma Reduction
- Access to information
- Social Media Influence
- Systemic Issues
- Workplace Stressors
- Intersecting Challenges



# **Crisis Intervention & De-Escalation**

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# What is Crisis Intervention?

## Crisis

is an unstable situation that exceeds one's ability to cope

## Crisis Intervention

is a short-term, time-limited intervention with the goal of establishing a person's equilibrium and to solve an immediate problem

## De-escalation

is the primary tool used in crisis intervention to safely and effectively intervene in a crisis

# Situational Crisis

- A situational crisis results from unanticipated, sudden, and unavoidable events that largely affect a person's identity and roles, and revolves around grief, usually from a loss of an established situation that threatens a person physically, socially, or psychologically.
- **Financial Hardships**
  - Homelessness
  - Unexpected expenses
- **Relationship Breakdowns**
  - Caregiver or provider
  - Conflict within relationships
- **Violence or Trauma**
  - Witnessing violence
  - Abuse
  - Traumatic events
- **Legal Issues**
  - Negative interactions with law enforcement
- **Loss of a Loved One**
  - Death of a family member, friend, pet
  - Loss of a caregiver or provider

# Recognizing Signs & Symptoms with Individuals with IDD

Physical	Mood	Behaviors & Thoughts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes in sleep patterns</li><li>• Physical discomfort</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Irritability</li><li>• Severe changes in mood, sleep, or energy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aggression to self or others</li><li>• Self-injurious behavior</li><li>• Hyperactivity</li><li>• Agitation</li><li>• Withdrawal/Isolation</li><li>• Repetitive Behaviors</li><li>•</li></ul>

# Recognizing Signs & Symptoms with Individuals with IDD

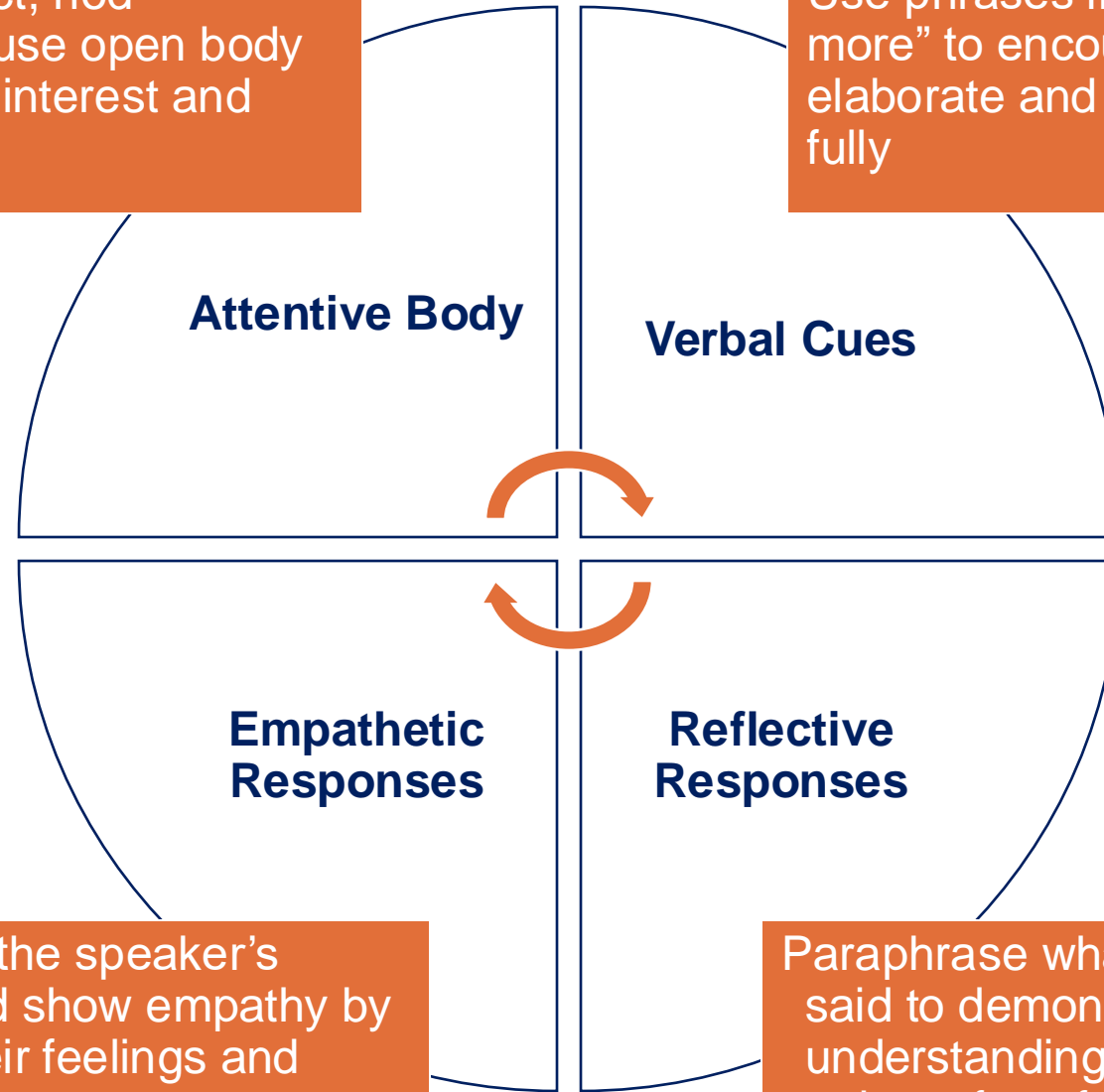
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Emotional Indicators	Environmental	Communication Attempts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crying or vocalizing</li><li>• Facial expressions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes in routine</li><li>• Sensory overload</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Non-verbal cues – increase gestures, pointing etc.</li><li>• Changes in usual communication - different gestures or sounds</li></ul>

# Active Listening

Maintain eye contact, nod occasionally, and use open body language to show interest and engagement

Use phrases like “I see” “Tell me more” to encourage the speaker to elaborate and express themselves fully



**Attentive Body**

**Verbal Cues**

**Empathetic Responses**

**Reflective Responses**

Acknowledge the speaker's emotions and show empathy by validating their feelings and experiences

Paraphrase what the speaker has said to demonstrate understanding and clarify any points of confusion





# Communication & De-Escalation Skills

Verbal	Environment	Space & Tone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Empathy</li><li>• Open-ended (5 W's and How)</li><li>• Emotional Labeling (clarifying other's feelings)</li><li>• Reassurance/Validation</li><li>• Effective Silence</li><li>• Summarizing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distance</li><li>• Reduce stimuli</li><li>• Allow for privacy but keep safety in mind</li><li>• Limit amount of unnecessary people</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take your time</li><li>• Body language</li><li>• Low &amp; Soft tone</li><li>• Limit body gestures</li><li>• Personalize (Introduce Self)</li><li>• Maintain eye contact</li><li>• Focus on feeling, not content</li><li>• Let them vent</li></ul>

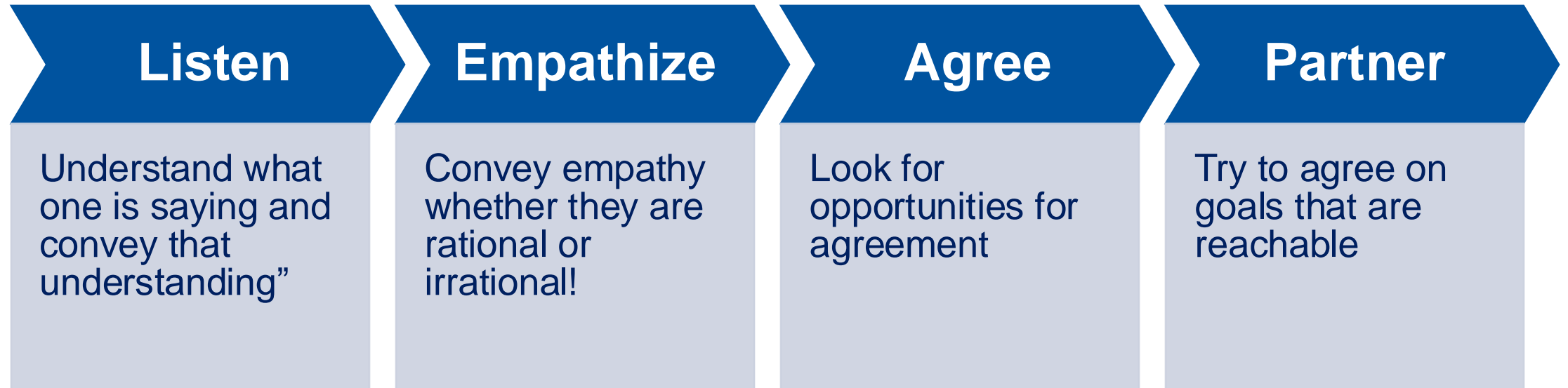


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## Things to Avoid

- Making promises you can't keep
- Demand obedience
- Engage in power struggle
- Act angry or afraid
- Laugh
- Speak in a patronizing tone
- Engage in psychosis

# LEAP Exercise



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Gabe, 35-year-old male, is blind and autistic. He is very sensitive to sound and can become agitated with loud noises. His housemate at the CILA has a tendency to close their bedroom door abruptly and loudly. This causes Gabe to begin yelling and the situation becomes escalated.

# Example

What would you say/do to help this person?

## Listen

Understand Gabe's experiences and feelings about the loud noises. Ask open-ended questions to get a clear picture of how the noise affects him.

### **To the Housemate:**

Hear their perspective on the situation and any challenges they might face in changing their behavior.

## Empathize

Acknowledge Gabe's sensitivity to sound and validate his feelings. For example, "I understand that loud noises can be very distressing for you."

### **With the Housemate:**

Recognize any difficulties they might have in remembering to close the door quietly. For example, "I know it can be hard to always remember to close the door gently."

## Agree

Find common ground between Gabe and his housemate. This could be agreeing on the importance of a peaceful living environment for everyone.

Set mutual goals, such as reducing noise levels and ensuring Gabe feels comfortable and safe.

## Partner

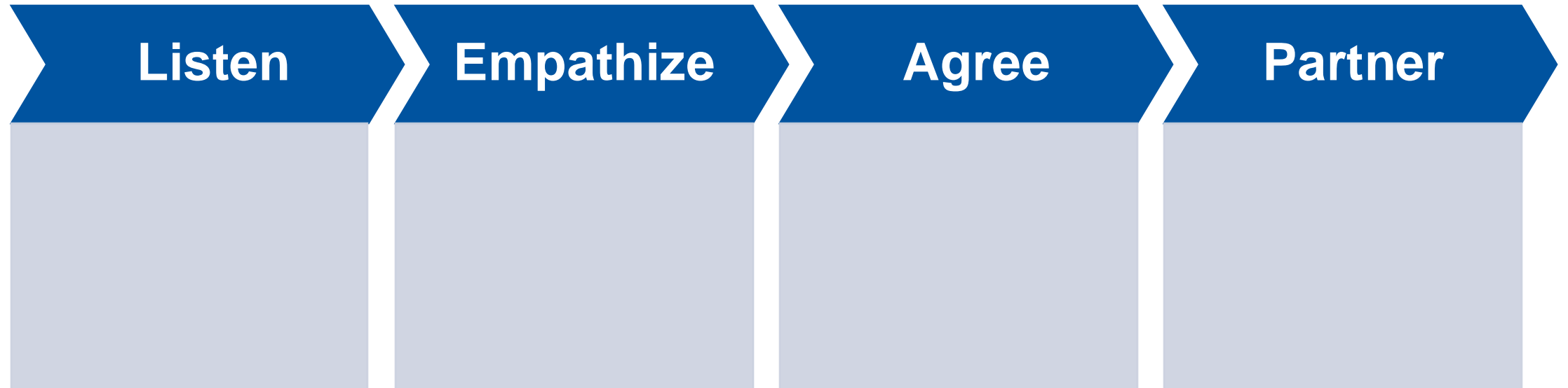
Encourage ongoing communication and support. For example, the housemate could remind themselves to close the door quietly, and Gabe could use noise-canceling headphones during times when noise is more likely.

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Georgia, 28-year-old female, likes to help others and finds this a way to bond with her peers. Georgia insists on helping her peer stand up out of her chair (despite her peer being able to do so independently). Staff intervene and remind Georgia that her peer does not need her help and ask her to step away. Georgia screams, rips her glasses off her face, and stomps away.

# Case Study 1

What would you say/do to help this person?



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Eric, a young adult on Autism Spectrum has aged out of school and only wants to be on screens at home. Refuses to go to a day program, social events, or job train. What can motivate these individuals to build a meaningful adult life when they have the capacity to make decisions for themselves and do not want to engage with anything other than screens?



# Case Study 2

What would you say/do to help this person?

**Listen**

**Empathize**

**Agree**

**Partner**

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Olivia, a young adult on the autism spectrum attended school remotely during Covid because of the health concerns but now experiences anxiety so extreme they refuse to leave the house. They have aged out of school, so homebound services are no longer available and therefore they have nothing to do and are becoming increasingly isolated and depressed. This also takes a toll on the caregivers because they cannot leave their adult child alone at home.

# Case Study 3

What would you say/do to help this person?

**Listen**

**Empathize**

**Agree**

**Partner**

# Key Takeaways

- Mental health vs mental health conditions are based on intensity, duration, and distress
- Crisis is an unstable situation that exceeds one's ability to cope
- Crisis intervention is a short-term, time-limited intervention with the goal of establishing a person's equilibrium and to solve an immediate problem
- De-escalation is the primary tool used in crisis intervention to safely and effectively intervene in a crisis call

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## What to do if you encounter someone in crisis?

- **NAMI Chicago Helpline: 833-626-4244**
  - Living Rooms/Triage Centers
- **Call 911, request CIT Officer**
  - Police learn verbal de-escalation skills and how to recognize signs of mental health crisis
  - CIT-certified officers respond to 911 calls with an identified mental health component
- **Call Suicide & Crisis Hotline: 988**



**NAMI**  
**CHICAGO**  
**HELPLINE**

LÍNEA DE AYUDA DE NAMI CHICAGO

**833.NAMI.CHI**  
(833.626.4244)

<b>Monday – Friday</b> lunes a viernes 9am – 8pm	<b>Saturday – Sunday</b> sábado a domingo 9am – 5pm
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   @NAMICHicago  
[namichicago.org](http://namichicago.org)

# Emergency Crisis Support

988	Call/Text 988 or visit 988lifeline.org
NAMI National	800-950-6264
NAMI Chicago	833-626-4244
Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255 or text 838255 For veterans and those concerned about them.
Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances	1-833-234-6343 or text HELP to 833234 Substance use and opioid use support.
The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender National Hotline	(888) 843-4564
IDHS Living Rooms	<a href="https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=126349">https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=126349</a>
Screening for and Assessing Suicide Risk	<a href="https://zerosuicide.edc.org/toolkit/identify/screening-options">https://zerosuicide.edc.org/toolkit/identify/screening-options</a>

Connect to the nearest emergency department or call 911 request a CIT trained officer



*Crisis  
Intervention &  
De-escalation*



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## Exercise – Differing Viewpoints

- Pepsi vs Coke
- New York vs Chicago style pizza
- Cats vs Dogs
- Cake vs Pie
- Instagram vs Facebook
- Marvel vs DC

