

This workbook focuses on stress reduction, communication skills, and problem-solving skills—all of which are important in maintaining control and avoiding crisis situations.

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TEAM SOLUTIONS™

Avoiding Crisis Situations

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INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

This instructor's guide and the corresponding workbook have been prepared in consultation with a number of leading authorities in the field of treatment of schizophrenia. They are designed and intended to be used with patients being treated for symptoms of schizophrenia as educational materials to supplement information provided by the patient's physician. This instructor's guide does not substitute for appropriate medical treatment and counseling. The material may be useful in answering questions about schizophrenia or medications. It may not answer all questions. Remember to remind patients that if they should have questions about their medications or particular treatment, or if they think they are having any possible unwanted effects, they should consult with their physician.

Instructor's Notes

Goals for This Workbook

After completing this workbook, individuals will be familiar with:

1. Risk factors that can lead to crisis
2. Skills that can help reduce stress and prevent crisis

Note to the Instructor

Duplicate the Knowledge Assessment (pre- and post-test) and have your clients complete it before starting this workbook. This will help you identify the subject areas in which your clients may need more help. When you've completed the workbook, have your clients complete the same Knowledge Assessment once again, so that you can measure how much they've learned and can identify subject areas that may require review. You will find the Knowledge Assessment at the end of these Instructor's Notes.

Page 2—Crises Can Happen Even if You’ve Been Feeling Well

Suggested Approach:

After reading this page, facilitate discussion about:

- People’s personal experiences with crisis
- What they did when a crisis occurred
- What could increase their risk of crisis
- What they do to reduce their risk of crisis

Pages 3-4—Risk Factors for Crises

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Define “risk factor”
2. Give examples of risk factors
3. Identify at least one positive life event that could be a risk factor



Suggested Approach:

After reading page 3, encourage individuals to:

- Describe a personal example of how one of the risk factors resulted in a crisis situation
- Discuss the risk factors they cope with in their daily lives
- Complete the written exercises on page 4

Potential Problem:

An individual focuses exclusively on what other people did or didn’t do that caused their crisis.

Suggested Response:

1. Empathize with their frustration
2. Agree with the idea that other people can influence our lives
3. Agree with their observation that we can’t control other people’s behavior
4. Express belief in their ability to control some areas of their life and reduce their chances of crisis
5. Move on

Pages 5-6—Managing Symptoms Such as Voices and Fears

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Identify ways to cope with symptoms
2. Identify what might make symptoms worse

Suggested Approach:

After reading page 5, encourage individuals to:

- Describe how they usually cope with symptoms
- Describe things that make their symptoms worse
- Complete the written exercises on page 6

Potential Problem:

An individual expresses hopelessness (i.e., “Nothing helps, I’ll never get better.”).

Suggested Response (Group Setting):

1. Agree that coping with symptoms can be difficult and may sometimes seem hopeless
2. Ask if anyone else in the group has felt hopeless before
3. Encourage discussion about feelings and how others have dealt with the issue
4. Express belief in each person’s ability to learn new ways to manage their symptoms and get better
5. Move on

Suggested Response (One-On-One):

1. Agree that coping with symptoms can be difficult, and may sometimes seem hopeless
2. Normalize their experience: everyone goes through slumps
3. Explore coping skills they’ve used in the past
4. Express belief in their ability to get out of this slump, manage their symptoms, and get better
5. Move on



Page 7—Managing Stressful Situations

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Verbalize an understanding that too much stress can eventually lead to crisis
2. Identify activities they would enjoy doing to relieve stress
3. Describe ways to manage time better and reduce stress
4. Demonstrate ability to do a deep breathing exercise correctly

Suggested Approach:

After reading this page, encourage individuals to:

- Discuss the cumulative effects of stress
- Brainstorm a variety of activities that can help relieve stress
- Complete the written exercise on the bottom of the page



Remind patients to talk with their doctor before beginning an exercise program.

Potential Problem:

“I tried that once and it didn’t work.”

Suggested Response:

1. Agree that using physical activity to manage stress requires patience, practice, and persistence
2. Suggest that practicing is often related to better results

Page 8—Organize Your Time

Suggested Approach:

Before reading this page, facilitate discussion about the connection between time management and stress management.

After reading this page, encourage individuals to:

- Give a personal example of when they felt rushed and stressed out
- Give a personal example of when they managed time well and avoided feeling stressed out
- Complete the written exercises
- Discuss their responses to the written exercises

Pages 9—Deep Breathing Exercises

Suggested Approach:

Before reading this page:

- Ask if anyone has ever taught them any relaxation techniques
- If yes, facilitate discussion about their experiences and if they use the techniques

After reading this page, encourage individuals to:

- Close their eyes and follow the directions as you read the steps aloud; repeat steps 2 through 4, four or five times
- Discuss the experience
- Give one example of when they could use deep breathing to relieve stress

Pages 10-14—Problem-Solving Skills

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Identify the three steps to effective problem solving
2. Demonstrate the ability to use the three steps

Suggested Approach:

When completing the written exercise, encourage individuals to:

- Choose an easy problem first and tackle harder problems later
- Identify the results or outcome they want to achieve

Page 11

Potential Problem:

An individual leaves the written exercise blank or only lists one potential solution—“I can’t think of any other solutions.”

Suggested Response:

1. Agree that coming up with new ideas can be difficult
2. Suggest that they list every idea—good and bad
3. Jokingly suggest a bad solution to the problem and encourage them to write it down
4. Help them come up with more ideas without discussing whether or not they’d be workable solutions (but ensure they end up with at least one workable solution)

Page 15 – Write Down the Problem

Suggested Approach:

When selecting a problem, encourage individuals to:

- Stick with a small problem and tackle the big problems later
- Identify the results or outcome they want to achieve

Potential Problem:

The person can't summarize their problem in three words no matter what you say or do.

Suggested Response:

1. Accept whatever amount of information they used to describe their problem
2. Use three of the words they've written to create a three-word summary of their problem
3. Suggest that they underline their three key words

Page 15-16 – What Doesn't Work, Think of New Ideas

Suggested Approach:

When completing the written exercises:

- Start by discussing ideas
- Encourage individuals to get ideas from other people

Potential Problem:

The person selects a solution that does not appear to be well-suited to the problem (e.g., "Call the police to find out who is knocking at the door").

Suggested Response:

1. Avoid ridicule, sarcasm, and critical remarks
2. Look over their list of possible solutions and find one or two that are better suited to the problem (if there aren't any, help them come up with at least two)
3. Ask them which of the two solutions (that are well-suited to the problem) they prefer
4. Suggest that the one they just selected might be the most effective solution and explain why

Page 17—Putting Your New Solution Into Action

Suggested Approach:

Assign page 17 for homework so they can try out their idea between sessions. When clients return for the next session, discuss how their solution worked.

Page 18—Improving Communication Skills

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Identify the four skills that are necessary for good communication
2. Demonstrate the ability to use the four skills
3. Verbalize an understanding that how they say something is as important as what they say
4. Identify situations that are stressful for them

Suggested Approach:

Before reading this section:

- Facilitate discussion about what “communication skills” are

After reading this section, encourage individuals to:

- Role-play the four skills
- Provide feedback about what skills were done well and what skills need more practice

Page 19

Tips About Using Role-Play:

- Role-playing is sometimes less stressful when people are instructed to do it **wrong** the first time
- Provide coaching during the role-play if an individual needs it
- Giving feedback in terms of “what skills were done well” and “what skills need more practice” helps make feedback more constructive and less prone to sounding critical
- In group situations, peer feedback can be quite effective when given constructively
- In one-on-one situations, encourage self reflection and feedback before providing your feedback

Pages 20-21—What Are You Really Saying?

Suggested Approach:

Before reading page 20, facilitate discussion about the equal importance of what you say and how you say it.

After reading pages 20 and 21, encourage individuals to:

- Role-play the example aloud
- Complete the written exercises

Page 22

Suggested Approach:

After reading each tip, encourage individuals to:

- Discuss the advantages of using the tip
- Discuss the disadvantages of not using the tip

Page 23—Identifying Situations That Are Hard for You

Suggested Approach:

Before reading this page, point out that social anxiety is a common experience for many people—including people who are not recovering from a mental illness.

Page 23—Written Exercise

Suggested Approach:

After completing the written exercise:

- Emphasize that social anxiety is not a sign of weakness or stupidity
- Suggest that social anxiety can be decreased by developing self-confidence
- Mention that self-confidence can be achieved through practice and positive self-talk

Page 24—Practicing Your Communication Skills

Suggested Approach:

After completing the written exercise:

- Facilitate discussion about the advantages of writing down a step-by-step plan before making a phone call
- Facilitate discussion about the problems that may occur if you **don't** write down a step-by-step plan before making a phone call



Page 25—Dealing With Visitors

Objectives for This Section:

After completing the top half of this page, individuals will be able to:

1. Verbalize that it is okay to shorten or avoid unexpected or unwanted visits in order to reduce stress
2. Identify polite ways to deal with unexpected or unwanted visitors
3. Demonstrate the ability to distinguish between polite and rude ways of dealing with unexpected or unwanted visitors

Suggested Approach:

Before reading this section, facilitate discussion about:

- Whether participants find it stressful to deal with unexpected and unwanted visitors
- Whether they think it's okay to politely shorten or avoid an unexpected and unwanted visit
- The advantages and disadvantages of politely shortening or avoiding an unexpected and unwanted visit

After reading this section, facilitate discussion about:

- Examples of **rude** ways to shorten or avoid an unexpected and unwanted visit
- Accepting responsibility for our own behavior (we choose to be polite instead of rude)
- **Not** taking responsibility for other people's feelings (We can't control their reactions or feelings. They might have "hurt feelings" even when we are polite. We are **not** responsible for their feelings.)

Page 25—Written Exercise

Potential Problem:

The person can't distinguish between polite and rude behaviors in the situation described, or seems to have trouble replacing a rude approach with a polite one.

Suggested Response:

1. Help them focus on the feeling/tone of being rude versus being polite
2. Reverse roles with them and help them reflect on which approach feels best from the receiving end
3. If these approaches are not productive, move on

Potential Problem:

The person can't think of anything to write for the written exercise.

Suggested Response:

1. Help them select the idea they like best from the ones listed on the top of page 25
2. Instruct them to write it in the space provided on the bottom of page 25 (either word for word or in their own words if possible)

Page 26—Taking Control of Your Life

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Identify ways to take control of their own life in order to reduce stress
2. Verbalize the importance of staying focused on successes and goals rather than setbacks

Suggested Approach:

After reading the list of bulleted statements on this page, encourage individuals to describe personal examples that relate to the statements.

After reading the last paragraph on the page, encourage individuals to:

- Discuss the advantages of staying focused on successes and goals rather than setbacks
- Complete the written exercise

Page 27—Getting Your Family and Friends to Help You Avoid Crisis

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Identify things they can do to prepare family members and friends to help them avoid crisis
2. Verbalize how they would like family members and friends to help them avoid a crisis when they feel one may be coming

Suggested Approach:

After reading the list of bulleted ideas on this page, encourage individuals to:

- Identify which of the ideas they have already used
- Identify which of the ideas they would like to use

After reading the last paragraph on the page, encourage individuals to:

- Discuss things that family members and friends could do that would **not** be helpful
- Discuss things that family members and friends could do that **would** be helpful
- Complete the written exercise

Pages 28-29—Taking Steps to Prevent Crisis

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Verbalize an understanding of what it means to prevent a crisis
2. Identify things they can do to help prevent a crisis from occurring

Suggested Approach:

After reading the list of bulleted ideas on page 28, encourage individuals to:

- Identify which of the ideas they are already using
- Identify which of the ideas they could use
- Complete the written exercise on page 29

Page 29**Potential Problem:**

The person can't think of anything to write for the written exercise.

Suggested Response:

1. Make one or two suggestions or help them select one or two ideas they'd like to use from the list on page 28
2. Instruct them to write them in the space provided (either word for word or in their own words if possible)

Pages 30-31—People Who Can Help You in a Crisis**Objectives for This Section:**

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Identify whom to call for help during a crisis
2. State how to contact key people when they need help with a crisis
3. Verbalize the advantages of giving a copy of the information to each person on their list

**Suggested Approach:**

After completing the written exercise, facilitate discussion about:

- The advantages of giving a copy of the list to each person on the list
- The advantages of calling people on the list **instead of** calling 911 or the police
- When they **should** call 911 or the police before calling someone on the list

Page 32—Making a Crisis Prevention Plan

Objectives for This Section:

After completing this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Identify the best time to make a crisis prevention plan
2. Verbalize the advantages of making a crisis prevention plan
3. State the advantages of getting input from the people they'll be calling for help

Suggested Approach:

After reading the first paragraph, facilitate discussion about:

- The advantages of making a crisis prevention plan when things are quiet and calm
- Why it's important to make a crisis prevention plan
- The advantages of getting input from the people they'll be calling for help

After reading the question about early warning symptoms, encourage individuals to:

- Discuss the meaning of the phrase “early warning symptoms”
- Identify examples of early warning symptoms
- Complete the written exercises

Page 33

Suggested Approach:

After reading item number 5, facilitate discussion about:

- Confidentiality and release of information
- The advantages of allowing hospital staff to share information with other people who are helping them

Potential Problem:

The person has decided that hospital staff should **never** have contact with any of their family, friends, or treatment team.

Suggested Response:

1. Explore the personal experiences or fears that resulted in that decision
2. Make a mental note to think about the issue and pursue it later in a non-confrontational manner
3. Consider referring the issue to the person's doctor or therapist for further discussion
4. Consider asking others in the group for constructive comments and feedback about the person's decision

Page 34—Crisis Situations Don't Have to Happen to You

Objectives for This Section:

After reading this section, individuals will be able to:

1. Verbalize an understanding that they **can** do things to decrease their risk of crisis
2. Explain that stressful situations can't be avoided entirely
3. Identify things they can do to prevent crisis

Suggested Approach:

After reading this page, facilitate discussion about:

- Why it's impossible to completely avoid all stressful situations
- The disadvantages of ignoring problems
- The advantages of including family members in developing a crisis prevention plan
- The likely outcome of not taking medicine, skipping doctor's appointments, not balancing rest and exercise, and ignoring early warning symptoms

Options for Getting Closure at the End of the Workbook:

- Help the person summarize the main points of the workbook
- Ask the person what parts of the workbook were most helpful
- Ask the person to identify two things they learned from the workbook
- Turn to the Contents page and help them identify one main point for each topic

It's time to complete the Knowledge Assessment. Please note that the Knowledge Assessment that follows is an original document that will need to be duplicated for your use.

Knowledge Assessment

For each question or statement, circle the best answer:

1. **A crisis situation can happen even if you've been feeling well.** (pg. 2)
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. **There are things you can do to help yourself avoid crisis.** (pg. 2)
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. **Risk factors are things that happen to you that can lead to a crisis situation.** (pg. 3)
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. **One example of a risk factor that CAN lead to crisis is:** (pg. 3)
 - a. You feel better and you keep taking your medicine
 - b. You go to support group meetings every week
 - c. You have a friend you spend time with
 - d. You move into your own apartment

5. **The thing that is LEAST likely to be a risk factor or lead to a crisis is:** (pg. 3)
 - a. You work a few hours a day at a fun, low-stress job
 - b. You have a cold and start taking a nonprescription cold medicine without checking with your doctor or pharmacist
 - c. You have trouble sleeping and don't tell anyone
 - d. You start drinking alcohol or using street drugs

6. **There's nothing you can do to manage symptoms such as hearing voices or feeling fearful.** (pg. 5)
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. **Too much stress can eventually lead to a crisis situation.** (pg. 7)
 - a. True
 - b. False

8. **Light exercise can help relieve stress.** (pg. 7)
 - a. True
 - b. False

9. **Having too much time and nothing to do can be stressful.** (pg. 8)
 - a. True
 - b. False

10. **Planning ahead and avoiding a last minute rush can help reduce stress.** (pg. 8)
 - a. True
 - b. False

11. **Deep breathing exercises aren't very helpful for calming people down.** (pg. 9)
 - a. True
 - b. False

12. **Taking one deep breath should be enough to calm you down.** (pg. 9)
 - a. True
 - b. False

13. **The three steps to problem solving are:** (pgs. 10-11)
- Choose an answer, try it, do it again
 - Find a solution, get what you want, make people change
 - Identify the problem, list what doesn't work, find a better solution
 - State what you want, ask the person to change, set personal limits
14. **If you try to solve a problem and it doesn't work, just give up. There probably aren't any other ways to solve the problem.** (pg. 17)
- True
 - False
15. **Many people with an illness such as schizophrenia have a hard time expressing themselves and understanding others.** (pg. 18)
- True
 - False
16. **The four skills necessary for good communication are:** (pg. 18)
- Talk, Ask questions, Give advice, Explain
 - Look, Listen, Share, Ask
 - Ask questions, Express your opinion, Explain, Give advice
 - Share, Challenge, Defend, Summarize
17. **How you say something is as important as what you say.** (pg. 20)
- True
 - False
18. **You should NEVER look at a person's face when they are talking to you.** (pg. 22)
- True
 - False

19. **Some people feel nervous about talking to people face to face or on the phone.** (pg. 23)
- a. True
 - b. False
20. **Writing down a simple step-by-step plan can help you feel more relaxed when you make a phone call.** (pg. 24)
- a. True
 - b. False
21. **One way to deal with unwanted or unexpected visitors WITHOUT being rude is:** (pg. 25)
- a. Tell them loudly and angrily to go away and leave you alone
 - b. Accuse them of showing up uninvited and demand that they only visit when they are invited
 - c. Explain that you're not feeling well and you will call them when you're feeling better
 - d. Be angry, tell them to go home, and slam the door
22. **One POSITIVE way to take control of your life and feel more relaxed is:** (pg. 26)
- a. Try to do everything at once
 - b. Put off solving problems until they are overwhelming
 - c. Keep count of the mistakes you make each day
 - d. Spot early warning symptoms and do something about them right away

23. **One HELPFUL thing you can do to prepare others to help you avoid crisis is:** (pg. 27)
- Hide your feelings from them
 - Don't tell them about your illness and your needs
 - Tell them what you want them to do if an emergency situation should happen
 - Don't let them talk to anyone on your treatment team
24. **One step you can take to help PREVENT a crisis from occurring is:** (pg. 28)
- Avoid drugs and alcohol
 - Ignore your early warning symptoms
 - Take your medicine only if you feel you need it
 - Take nonprescription medicines without asking anyone if they will make your symptoms worse
25. **The best time to make a crisis prevention plan is when things are starting to go wrong.** (pg. 32)
- True
 - False
26. **It's a good idea to create your crisis plan with your family or friends and be prepared to use it if needed.** (pg. 32)
- True
 - False
27. **Keeping stress at an even, comfortable level is one way to keep yourself from heading toward a crisis.** (pg. 34)
- True
 - False

28. All stressful situations can and should be completely avoided. (pg. 34)

- a. True
- b. False

29. Solving problems before they get too big may help you handle stressful situations more easily. (pg. 34)

- a. True
- b. False

30. One way you can help yourself PREVENT crisis situations is: (pg. 34)

- a. Get lots of rest and avoid exercising
- b. Watch for early warning symptoms
- c. Skip your medicine on the days you feel well
- d. Skip appointments with your doctor if you feel okay

Answer Key

1. a	11. b	21. c
2. a	12. b	22. d
3. a	13. c	23. c
4. d	14. b	24. a
5. a	15. a	25. b
6. b	16. b	26. a
7. a	17. a	27. a
8. a	18. b	28. b
9. a	19. a	29. a
10. a	20. a	30. b

