

LASER PROTOCOL FOR ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING IN CRISIS INTERVENTION

The crisis worker's and client's personal beliefs and values pervade crisis response and ethical decision-making.

Crisis worker and client safety always take precedence.

L
LEGAL ISSUES

Follow all federal and state laws, and relevant policies and procedures. If legal issues arise as the crisis unfolds, go back to this step. Common legal issues involve mandated reporting, duty to warn, and duty to protect.

A
ASSESSMENT

Conduct a triage assessment to determine level of affective, behavioral, and cognitive reactions.

Mild (3-10)	Low Moderate (11-16)	High Moderate (17-21)	Severe (10 on any scale or 22-30)
No or minimal impairment. Relative emotional stability, nondisruptive behavior, able to respond to questions and make decisions.	Elevated affect that is not out of control, minimally threatening behavior that is not immediately dangerous, restricted thinking and problem-solving.	Emotional instability and dysregulation, impulsive and potentially harmful behavior, illogical thought and absence of healthy decision-making.	Significant emotional instability or devoid of emotion, ineffective behavior that may be out of control, chaotic, or potentially lethal. Frozen cognition with no ability to make healthy decisions.
Crisis worker functions as sounding board	Crisis worker functions as consultant	Crisis worker functions as partner	Crisis worker functions as guide or caretaker

S
SETTING

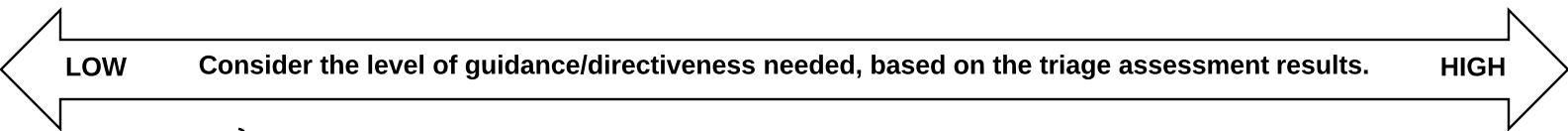
Consider the setting and any relevant policies and procedures.

Considerations related to the setting.					
Street/Public	Disaster	Agency	School	Hospital	Home
Environmental safety, bystanders, excessive stimuli	Environmental safety, complex or systemic loss, basic needs unmet	Access to assistance and/or supervision, potential to contain threat	Contagion effect or mass panic, guardian contact	Level of confinement, access to assistance and/or supervision	Access to lethal means, interruptions, willingness to leave the home

E
ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Evaluate relevant ethical principles to explore possible courses of action and the respective consequences. When possible, seek consultation and/or supervision.

Fidelity, Beneficence, Justice, Non-Maleficence, Veracity, Autonomy



R
RESOLUTION

Identify the most appropriate and ethical response, taking into consideration all aspects of the LASER protocol. Apply appropriate crisis intervention strategies. Document.

As new information emerges, return to earlier steps to re-evaluate the situation and your response.