Counseling and Crisis Intervention Skills

• Skills are tools you can use to help empower a survivor.

• Think about creating a “toolbox.”
  – What is in your toolbox?
  – What should not be in your toolbox?
Active Listening

Active listening is the process of putting into your own words what you have just heard, then confirming that interpretation with the survivor.

Active listening is sometimes called paraphrasing, restatement, or feedback.

Active listening includes silence.
Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions place the survivor at the center of the conversation. They allow the survivor to respond freely with feelings or thoughts.
Clarifying

Clarifying is a way for the counselor to get a more complete picture of the situation. It involves asking questions in order to more clearly understand the survivor’s needs and to help the survivor develop options.
Encouragers are simple statements or phrases that help the survivor keep focused on a thought or feeling.

Encouragers provide assurance of listening and help to create a space for active listening.
Feedback

Feedback is the process of interpreting the overall content of a conversation or pulling together several disjointed thoughts.
Reframing

Reframing occurs when someone understands a situation in a new light with a new awareness, often based on new knowledge or growth.
Normalizing

Normalizing is a process that includes helping survivors discover they are not alone in their thoughts, experiences, feelings, or behaviors.

Normalizing helps survivors break the isolation they often face by assuring them that there is nothing “wrong” with them.
Feelings and Experiences of Secondary Survivors

• Concern
• Confusion
• Helplessness
• Guilt
• Responsibility
• Shame
• Loss of intimacy

• Feeling out of control
• Wanting to harm the perpetrator
• Frustration
• Anger
• Emotional shut-down
Counseling Secondary Survivors

- Active listening and support.
- Not trying to “fix” the situation.
- Empowerment.
- Validation.
- Responsibility for one’s own healing.
- Healing takes time.
- Reassurance.
- Seek additional supports for self.
- Safe environment.
How Secondary Survivors Can Help

- Expectations
- Recognition and acceptance
- Communication
- Decision-making
- Unconditional love and support
- Listen, believe, provide options
Cultural Sensitivity

A counselor must be aware of the ways that survivors’ cultures and backgrounds impact their healing processes.

A counselor needs to actively become an ally to their clients across differences.
Role-Plays

Discussion Questions:

• Counselors
  Summarize the basic concerns/problems presented by the survivor.

• Survivors
  What was helpful or not helpful?

• Observers
  What did you notice about the counseling relationship in this scenario?
Risk Assessment for IPSA

Contributing Factors:

- Level of escalating violence or threats of violence
- Presence of weapons such as guns
- Perpetrator’s prior criminal record
- Forced sex acts
- Present stressors in perpetrator’s life
- History of drug or alcohol abuse
- Perpetrator’s psychiatric history
Safety Planning for IPSA

• Safety planning is a strategy and process that includes first assessing the risk of or actual danger and/or lethality of a perpetrator, then assisting the survivor in deciding the best course of action.

• A safety plan can be either verbal or written; it details the various aspects of a survivor’s life in terms of planning how best to keep safe in each place and scenario.
The Survivor Is the Expert

• The survivor knows best.
• Many survivors predict that the perpetrator will injure or kill them if they try to leave. Believe them, and work on a safety plan accordingly.
• Forcing survivors to do something before they’re ready may actually increase the level of danger.
Screening for Perpetrators

• Listen carefully.
• Clarify uncertainties.
• Ask client to describe situation slowly and chronologically.
• Refer perpetrators to specialized services.
Boundaries

• Clear boundaries provide safety and clarity for survivors.

• Counselors and advocates have limits regarding:
  – Disclosure of personal information
  – Time spent with survivor
  – Process of termination
  – Providing appropriate services
  – Physical contact

• Testing of boundaries should be confronted.