

WS2 Handout 28 (Slide 144): Possible Questions to Ask When Identifying Crisis Problems

Note. Crisis interveners will need to exercise caution when asking these questions. Different students in different situations will be more or less able to participate in this problem-identification activity.

1. To determine the nature and severity of the student's crisis experience, introduce your questions:
 - a. I know that you've been through a lot of difficult things. May I ask you some questions about what you have been through?
 - i. Where were you during the crisis?
 - ii. Did you get hurt?
 - iii. Did you see anyone get hurt?
 - iv. How afraid were you?
2. To help identify problems generated by the death of a family member or close friend, ask the following questions:
 - a. Did someone close to you get hurt or die as a result of the crisis event?
 - b. Who got hurt or died?
3. To help identify problems generated by the immediate postdisaster circumstances and ongoing threat, ask the following:
 - a. Do you need any information to help you better understand what has happened?
 - b. Do you need information about how to keep you and your family safe?
 - c. Do you need information about what is being done to protect your classmates and community?
4. To help identify problems generated by being separated from, or concerned about, the safety of loved ones, ask these questions:
 - a. Are you worried about anyone close to you right now?
 - b. Do you know where they are?
 - c. Is there anyone especially important, like a family member or friend, who is missing?
5. To help identify problems generated by physical illness or the need for medication ask the following:
 - a. Do you have any medical or mental health conditions that need attention?
 - b. Do you need any medications that you don't have?
 - c. Do you need to have a prescription filled?
 - d. Can you get in touch with your doctor?
6. To help identify problems generated by losses incurred as a result of the disaster (for example, home, school, personal property, or pets) ask the following:
 - a. Was your home destroyed or badly damaged?
 - b. Did you lose other important personal property?
 - c. Did a pet die or get lost?
 - d. Was your school or neighborhood destroyed or badly damaged?

7. To help identify problems generated by extreme feelings of guilt or shame state the following:
 - a. It sounds as if you are being really hard on yourself about what happened.
 - b. It seems that you feel you could have done more.

8. To help identify if prior losses or crisis experiences are generating problems, state or ask the following:
 - a. Sometimes events like this can remind people of previous bad times.
 - b. Have you ever been in a disaster before?
 - c. Has some other bad thing happened to you in the past?
 - d. Have you ever had someone close to you die?

9. To help identify whether any specific activities are being (or will be) disrupted by the crisis event, ask the following question:
 - a. Were any special events (birthday, graduation, beginning of the school year, vacation) coming up that were disrupted by the crisis?

10. To help identify any other problems that might have been generated by the crisis event, ask open-ended questions such as the following:
 - a. Is there anything else we have not talked about that is important for me to know?

Note. From *Psychological First Aid: Field Operations Guide* (2nd ed., p. 57–62), by M. Brymer et al., 2006 Los Angeles, CA: National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Center for PTSD. Reprinted with permission.