

Green Apple Counseling

1500 10th Ave S. Ste 200 Great Falls MT, 59405 Phone: 406-866-0350

POLICY: CRISIS INTERVENTION

PURPOSE: To provide guidance for trained individuals during a crisis situation

PROCEDURE:

At no time should physical contact be used by Green Apple staff to restrain clients.

Should a client appear to be out of control and a danger to self or to others clear out office: have one counselor monitor the client and someone else call 911.

Crisis in office:

- 50% of Employees will be trained in de-escalation training, decided by the Managing Board.
- Clear the area of bystanders and avoid becoming a spectator when someone is in the vulnerable stage of crisis, to minimize the emotional contagion associated with aggression/violence.
- Adjust the personal space between yourself and the client as the client's anxiety level increases/decreases.
- Give the client an opportunity to de-escalate on his or her own by giving the person space. Three feet is considered a neutral zone.
- Stay relaxed. If you are tense, you will need to relax before you can intervene effectively.
- Proactively utilize your body language (eye contact). Neutral facial, open posture, and minimal physical gestures/movements. Avoid reactivity, communicating negative attitudes or emotions such as intolerance or anger.
- Control your tone of voice including the rate of your speech, the cadence, pitch, volume, and modulation. You need to communicate that you are maintaining control.
- Self-awareness – be aware of verbal and non-verbal communication and messages sent to clients.
- Be specific and clear (verbal).

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- State exactly what the inappropriate behavior is. State exactly what is acceptable.
- Don't argue with clients, set limits firmly, and then follow it through.
- Keep your tone of voice calm and even to help the client reduce anxiety and fear. Whispering disarms a client who is yelling.
- Do not make unrealistic promises or give confusing or disingenuous answers.
- Follow through each time you make agreements
- Actively listen.
- Ask questions that will help you help them. Who, what, where, and when.
- Ask specifically what it is that you can do to help them.
- Honor reasonable requests. If you cannot do something immediately, let them know this.
- Be sensitive to cultural/status differences between you and the client. Extreme dissimilarities in the use of language, appearance, dress, or social status can prohibit communication, foster dissension, and/or incite conflict. Be aware that different cultures interpret eye contact and physical gestures to mean vastly different things. Attempt to be sensitive to these subtleties.
- Control the environment. Scan the office environment for potentially dangerous furnishings/objects that could be used as a weapon (a letter opener, paperweight, small table).
- Assure yourself of an escape route in the event that the interventions you attempt are not effective in de-escalating the client. Avoid putting yourself in a corner. Minimize the risk of being "cut off." Consider the arrangement of furniture, the configuration of walls/doors, your distance from the egress point and the person.
- If all efforts at de-escalation fail, call 911
- If 911 is used, the only people to interact with emergency personnel will be the licensed counselor and the one that called 911

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- All other employees are to make sure that bystanders are safe and cleared out.

Crisis Out of Office:

- Green Apple provides answering phone services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - If it is within working hours, the crisis will be referred to a provider who has been trained in crisis phone calls immediately.
 - If it occurs non-working hours, the phone number is forwarded to Horizon Answering services that have trained professionals available to triage.
- If the client cannot be talked down, and if necessary, they will be encouraged to go to the Emergency room.
 - IF they have Self harm or harm to others ideation with plan, 911 will be called to their location.

Documentation

- All Crisis Calls during working hours will be documented in the as a progress note by the counselor and contact log by the person who answered the phone in Theranest, the software program, that is used.
- There is also a Log of all Crisis Calls at the front desk.
- All Crisis calls during non-working hours will be faxed by Horizon and put in client's file under General Documents.
- All documentation should include
 - Date of call
 - Staff involved
 - Mental health status
 - Nature of emergency
 - Intervention
 - Result in intervention
 - Signed by licensed provider