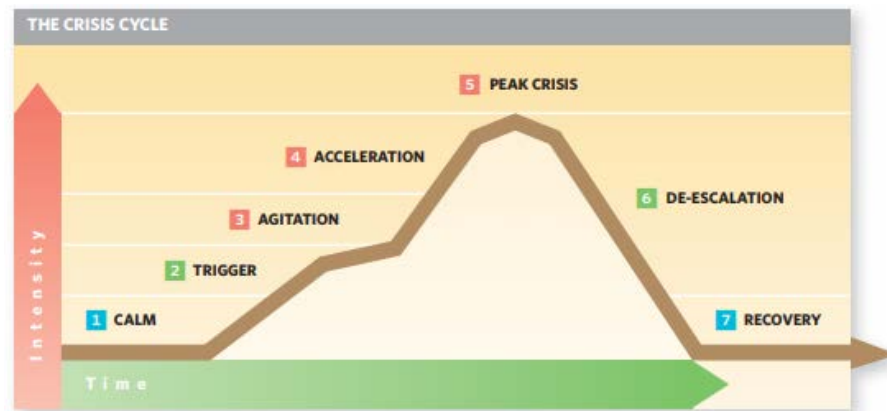


Information Sheet

The Crisis Cycle at Home

Many of us as parents have never heard of the crisis cycle in regards to our children's behavior and because of that, we use the wrong interventions at the worst possible time. Many educators have received training on this subject and have learned interventions to use to hopefully break this cycle before it reaches its peak.

Take a look at this graphic found in [Utah's LRBI Technical Assistance Manual](#).



As you can see, there are several stages to a crisis cycle. Helping your child recognize some of these will help him/her to learn techniques to manage their behavior as well as how you react in this situation. (*Worksheet on last page.*)

1. CALM

Do you and your child know what calm looks and feels like? At this point the child follows directions and accepts corrective feedback and can ignore irritants. This is a good time to teach your child rules, appropriate behavior and problem solving skills.

2. TRIGGER

Next can you identify what might trigger irritation such as loud noises, difficult academic demands, too much stimulation, and schedule changes, etc? The trigger may be external or internal. At this point it helps to increase opportunities for success, consider the function of the behavior and remove or modify the trigger. For anxious children, teaching and practicing the skill of having a Plan A and a Plan can B help.

3. AGITATION

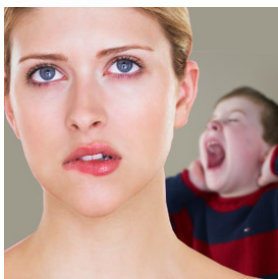
What does agitation or escalating behaviors look like? Watch for signs such as clenched fists, tightened jaws, increased whining, etc. At this point if you can re-direct or distract your child, you might be able stop the cycle.

- Provide reasonable options and choices
- Make modifications to the environment
- Show empathy for the child's concerns.

It is also essential for the parent to remain calm and not engage in a power struggle.

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4. ACCELERATION

When the child is accelerating, behavior becomes more provocative, more intense, can be threatening and become more personal (You're the worst mother in the world). Interventions become more focused on safety. You need to remove all triggering factors and follow the crisis plan you have already developed. Disengaging from arguments and confrontations must take place. Use a calm but serious tone.

5. PEAK

This is when your child has lost control and can display the most severe problem behavior. During this stage, the child may be physically aggressive, be self-injurious, destroy property, hyperventilate or escape. The most critical component is safety. Clear the room of your other children and remove dangerous items. Do not confront, argue or try to reason. Calm is essential. Educator and behavior specialist Marian Hunt likens talking to your child at this point as throwing gasoline on a fire.

6. DE-ESCALATION

Your child may seem scared and confused at this point and could blame others, minimize the problem or withdraw.

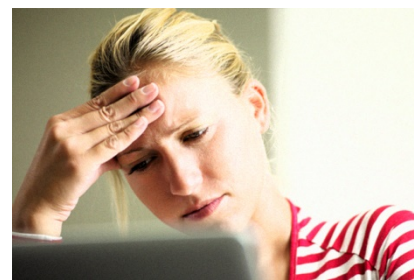
- Remove excess attention
- Don't nag
- Avoid blaming
- Don't force apology
- Consider the function of the behavior
- Emphasize starting anew

7. RECOVERY

Your child may withdraw, go to sleep, or attempt to correct the problem. Sometimes children will apologize and be very sad and embarrassed by their behavior. This can be a time to follow through with consequences. Afterwards, debrief and review appropriate behavior. Any display of appropriate behavior should be positively reinforced.

Some problem solving questions for the child to answer when debriefing are:

- What did I do?
- Why did I do it?
- What could I have done instead?
- What do I have to do next?
- Can I do it?

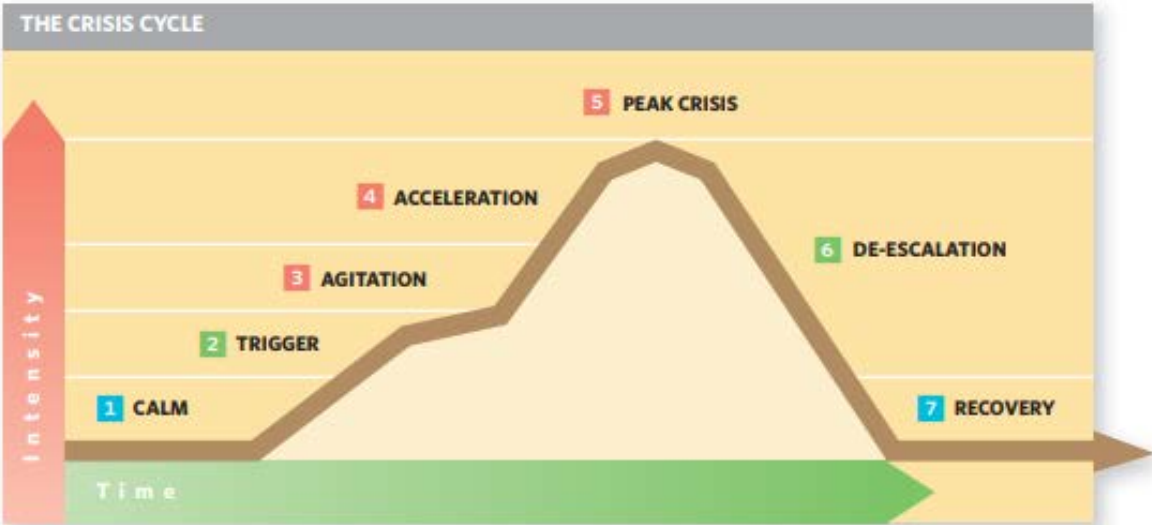


Information for this sheet was adapted from:

Preparing for & Responding to Crises & Emergencies, Sugai & Colvin, 1999, OSEP Center on PBIS

[LRBI Technical Assistance Manual: Positive Behavioral Supports & Selection of Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions](#), Utah State Board of Education, 2015.

Crisis Cycle Worksheet



Crisis Cycle Phases	Responses
1 CALM	•
2 TRIGGER	•
3 AGITATION / ESCALATION	•
4 ACCELERATION	•
5 PEAK CRISIS	•
6 DE-ESCALATION	•
7 RECOVERY	•