



BLACK LIVES MATTER

THE WORLD IS WATCHING

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH: HOW TO CHECK IN DURING A CRISIS

RESOURCE GUIDE

BY BRITNEY PADDY, M.A., QMHP

This guide explains how to check-in from a trauma-informed approach during a crisis using therapeutic interventions. It lays out three stages outlined using therapeutic interventions based in person-centered theory and Dr. Clara Hill's "3 Stage Model" for helping (e.g. exploration, insight, and action).

Stage 1: Initiating the Check-In

Employ open-ended questions and ask from a place of empathy (consistent with person-centered theory). Explore the individual's emotional-mental-physical wellbeing. It is important to acknowledge the person's state of being before further probing. Avoid forcing the person to dissect the crisis. In essence, this stage is all about exploring how your loved-one feels.

- How are you doing? How are you doing at this moment?
- How does that feel for you? How does that make you feel?
- What do you need to feel safe? Supported? Loved?

Stage 2: Forming the Check-In

Employ open-ended questions and ask from a place of genuine curiosity (consistent with person-centered theory). Create a safe space that is conducive to critical thinking and expression. It is important to make your loved-one feel seen and heard, especially if the crisis minimizes their voice, visibility, safety, etc. Avoid judgement about how the person reacts to the crisis. Use language that is trauma-informed, meaning take into consideration any sensitivities the person may have about the crisis or previous crisis/trauma history. In essence, this stage is all about understanding your loved-one's thoughts and feelings about the crisis.

- What's it like for you to hear...? What's it like for you to see...? What's it like for you to think...?
- What do you mean by that?
- Tell me more about that?
- I hear you saying...
- It sounds as though...
- You feel ____ when _____
- You act/ behave _____ when _____

Stage 3: Conclude the Check-In

Employ open-ended questions and ask from a place of partnership (consistent with person-centered theory). Promote your loved-one's strengths while also extending your support. Highlight the ability to brainstorm ideas that are adaptive, healthy, productive, and solution-focused. Gently encourage at least one actionable idea. In essence, this stage is about collaborative action.

- How can I support you? What can I do to help?
- What are your coping skills? Can I offer suggestions?
- I will _____ in order to support you
- You will _____ in order to support yourself

Conclusion

Use trauma-informed language; gentle encouragements; and refrain from assumptions, judgement, and dismissive attitudes. Utilize these stages with flexibility, noting that the most important aspect of supporting a loved-one during a crisis is acknowledging their needs and verbalizing how to meet those needs.

ABOUT US

The World Is Watching is a global coalition demanding concrete actions to end police brutality and systemic racism in the US. We are leaders, foreign and domestic professionals, organizations, grassroots activists, and allies. Amidst the largest civil rights movement in history, we are strategically mobilizing the global community in the fight for justice.