**Unit 9. Stress and Crisis**

**9.5 Types of Crisis**

**9.6 Phases of Crisis**

**Introduction To Crisis**

Crisis is any transient situation that requires the reorganization of one’s psychological structure and behaviour, that causes sudden alteration in the person’s expectation of self, and that cannot be handle with the usual coping mechanism.

According to the Taylor, 1982: “Crisis is a state of disequilibrium resulting from the interaction of an event with the individuals or family’s coping mechanisms, which are inadequate to meet the demands of the situation combined with the individuals or family’s perception of the meaning of the event”.

A person in crisis is temporarily unable to cope with or adapt to the stressors by using methods of problem solving .

Crisis is a situation that cannot be resolved by usual method of coping mechanism as a result person become unable to function normally and requires interventions to regain equilibrium.

Crisis is a time of great danger, difficulty or uncertainty when problems must besolved or important decisions must be made e.g political crisis, financial crisis, etc. It is a time when a problem, a bad situation or an illness is at its worst point. Especially loss of loved one or valued body part, can be viewed as a crisis event.

**Characteristics of Crisis**

According to Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer that crisis have four defining characteristics that are,

* Specific,
* Unexpected,
* Non routine events or series of events that create high level uncertainty and
* Threat or perceived threat to an organization’s high priorty goal.

The characteristics of crisis are,

* Temporary state of disequilibrium precipitated by an event
* Unexpected [ i.e., a surprise]
* Creates uncertainty
* Self-limiting- usually 4-6 weeks.
* Seen as a threat to important goals, often experienced as ultimately life threatening, whether this perception is realistic or not.
* Communication with significant others is often decreased or cut off.
* Crisis can promote growth and new behaviour.

-Rai L., (2019), “Nursing Concepts Theories and Principles”

**TYPES OF CRISIS**

There are three types of characteristics. They are,

1. Maturation or developmental crisis
2. Situational crisis
3. Adventitious crisis

Situation 1.

In a family, they have six children, one son and five daughters and are already grown up. They all are educated, well manner, socially active and helpful: but nobody got married.

They are scared , feared about marriage. In their childhood, father beacme alcoholic, and mother was emotionally broken down. They did not see positive aspect of family in early age.

1. **Maturation or developmental crisis**

- also called as normative crisis

- transition point that everyone experiences in the process of bio-pyschosocial growth and development.

- individual move into successive stage often generate disequilibrium. Individuals are required to make cognitive and behavioral changes that accompany development.

- developmental crisis are normal, transitional phases that are expected as people move from one stage of life to another that are accompanied by changes in thoughts, feelings, and abilities . life stage and related concerns may include:

-for eg, birth, weaning, starting to school, midlife, retirement, etc.

**Causes of developmental Crisis**

* Skill deficit for example, parent doesnot have the skill to be parent; having a baby could become a crisis situation.
* Inability to picture himself in new role,
* Lack of interpersonal resources like inadequate communication skills,
* not being able to achieve certain goals or
* inability to realize alternatives to his present life style
* Refusal by others in social system to see the person in a different role like when the adolescents tries to assume the adult role, the parent may persist him in keeping him the child role.

**[Some examples:](https://www.slideshare.net/sapanashrestha12/crisis-249086121" \l "15)**

**[• Child](https://www.slideshare.net/sapanashrestha12/crisis-249086121" \l "15)birth**: There are daily routine change, relationship change, increased responsibility, increased expenditure. If the women cannot manage changing responsibility and emotional feelings appropriately, crisis may occur.

**Infancy**

* forming secure healthy attachments
* Stranger wariness(trust) and separation anxiety

Weaning: It underlines a physical change associated with the ability to eat and digest food other than milk or formula. Crisis occurs if baby cannot adopt new food or care provider is unable to provide appropriate formula.

****Childhood****

* Beginning school
* Establishing peer relationships
* Peer competition

• School entry: a child faces new environment. There are too many unknown faces, new rules, interaction with unfamiliar/less familiar language, and role- change in home to interaction with school.

****Adolescence****

* Puberty
* Relationships involving sexual attraction
* Exploring independence
* Choosing a career

****Young Adulthood****

* Leaving home
* Continuing one’s education
* Getting started in an occupation
* Marriage
* Managing a home
* Pregnancy
* Childbirth
* [Marriage: changes](https://www.slideshare.net/sapanashrestha12/crisis-249086121" \l "16)in value, belief, perception, responsibility, environment, life style may aggravate crisis.

****Middle Adulthood****

* Physical changes of aging, menopause
* Maintaining social status and standard of living
* Dealing with changes in adolescent children
* If an individual is unable to manage relationship with family and society, unable to accept and manage physical health problems, unable to meet the need of middle age, crisis occurs.

• Menopause: psycho-social crisis occurs if a woman is unable to accept changes in feminine characteristics, identity crisis and social norms.

****Older Adulthood****

* Decreased physical abilities and health
* Changes in residence
* Retirement and reduced income
* Death of spouse
* Death of friends
* Facing one’s own death  
  (Newton, 2022)

• Retirement: low self-esteem due to feeling of isolation, decrease income, loss of self-identity, prestige, dignity.

- https://wildirismedicaleducation.com

1. **Situational Crisis**

A situational crisis (sometimes called accidental or external crisis) is a response to a sudden and unavoidable traumatic event that largely affects a person’s identity and roles.

The situational crisis arises out of external events over which a person has no control. When situation is sudden, unexpected, and unfortunate it can produce stress as the client tries to adapt using his/her available resources.

**[•](https://www.slideshare.net/sapanashrestha12/crisis-249086121" \l "18)** [A crisis](https://www.slideshare.net/sapanashrestha12/crisis-249086121" \l "18)develops when the person's usual coping abilities personality or other life circumstances make the unplanned situation overwhelming for example, sudden illness, accident, natural disaster, power struggle, rape etc.

• That is too threatening to the person’s immediate resources or ability to cope. It requires a change in behavior.

* also known as accidental crisis.
* The time taken for healthy or unhealthy adaptation to occur is usually from one to six weeks.
* It usually follows the loss of an established support or role.
* The threat or loss of a role necessary to maintain self-image, usually will lead to a crisis state.

 Examples

* Unexpected loss of a job,
* failure in school,
* loss of a spouse,
* birth of a retarded child,
* Diagnosis of a terminal or chronic illness
* assault
* sudden loss of job or status
* sudden onset of illness

1. Adventitious crisis

• Social crisis is accidential, uncommon and unanticipated and result in multiple losses and radical environmental changes. It is also known as events of disaster.

* They are rare, unexpected happenings that arenot part of everyday life and amy result from
* natural disasters, such as fires,floods,war, earthquake, etc.
* Global pandemics, such as influenza, COVID-19
* Interpersonal disasters like assault, rape, act of terrorism, murder, etc.

• These crises affect many people who experience both acute and post traumatic stress reaction.

• This type of crisis is unlike maturational and situational crisis because it doesn’t occur in the lives of all people.

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**Phases of Crisis**

Each type of crisis result in predictable phases of behavior. The phases involved are shock, followed by gegeral realization of the crisis, then defensive retreat, acknowledgement, resolution or adaptation.

1. **Initial impact/ shock**

Person feels hidh level of stress, helpless, anxiety, overwhelmed, depressed, chaos, disorganized thinking and behavior, and impaired judgement. He is unable to plan and solve the problems logically. This phase lasts for short period of time (few hours to 2 days). the person is unable to meet basic needs without help. Poor perception, ignore, becoming withdrawal or hyperactive or deny.

Suggestions from others are most helpful at this time.

1. **Defense retreat**

The person tries to use successful way of solving the problems or adjusting, but tension and discomfort arenot reduced and the situation isnot alleviated. He feels upset and ineffective. He may try to refine the problem, usually unrealistically avoid the problems or seek the support of others.

He may retreats into himself avoiding reality , he may become disorient, discomfort, indifferent, apathetic or repression. Physical symptoms are usually minimal, socially withdrawn or superficially hyperactive, but unable to maintain his social roles. This phase may lasr for prolonged period of time depends upon this situation.

1. **Recoil or acknowledgement**

Begins when the fact imposes themselves, the person realizw the objective, the reality of the situation and slowly begins to redefine it attempting to do problem solving. Gradually person can make plan and by trial amd error, finds solution for the situation. Physically he may feel weak, he recognizes that he has been a social burden and makes plans to resume his former roles to the degree possible.

1. **Resolution/ adaption**

Resolution or adaptation and change occurs when the person perceive the crisis situation in a positive way and integrate the painful event in a new self. He can do successful problem solving and express feeling about the events. He becomes organized, and plans using his abilities and appropriate resources.

Physically he is functioning at optimum level, socially shows matured behavior and coped to avoid future similar crisis.