



Life Space Crisis Intervention

Reclaiming Children & Youth Caught in Self-Defeating Patterns

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

THE PROBLEM

Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau paints a bleak picture for today's neediest young people: 13% of all children under age 18 (almost 40% of all Black or Hispanic children) live in poverty-stricken households, many in single-parent homes barely making ends meet. The high incidence of abuse, neglect, alcoholism, drug addiction, violence and criminality in some of these families has a staggering impact upon these children.

Even youth raised in more comfortable conditions may experience significant problems. An increasing number of children from all socioeconomic classes display signs of autism, hyperactivity, learning difficulties, health conditions, or personal anxiety, any of which may interfere with healthy emotional development.

Longitudinal research indicates that children raised in aggressive or overly anxious conditions more frequently begin school without the cognitive skills and emotional resources needed to adjust to their classrooms. As a result, many experience debilitating academic failure and social rejection within the first four years of school, and are eventually referred for special education services as emotionally disturbed or behaviorally disordered (ED/BD).

Because the public school system is poorly equipped to deal with their problems, a growing number of students with ED/BD end up in alternative schools and out-of-home placements. Emergency shelters, foster care, group homes, therapeutic camps, residential treatment centers, boot camps, training schools, and juvenile correctional institutions are flooded with youth who have legitimate emotional problems. In these programs however, the focus is often so exclusively upon compliance and consequences that emotional issues are frequently overlooked.

THE SOLUTION

Resiliency research points to the powerful impact of mentor relationships in guiding youth through challenging periods in their lives. Yet in a time when they most need mentors, relationship-wary youth often sabotage valuable opportunities to connect with caring adults. Staff want to help, but find themselves uncertain about how to interpret student rejection, confused about what to say when talking with angry or anxious youth in crisis.

Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) is an advanced counseling technique based on the seminal work of Drs. Fritz Redl and David Wineman. LSCI utilizes skilled and caring staff who are already in the "life space" of the children they serve to offer guidance when students most need it: in emotional crisis. LSCI training provides these staff with a mental roadmap to follow when talking with troubled, angry, and vulnerable children in the minutes and hours following a crisis when they are most available to learning.

THE DETAILS

The LSCI Institute's training program was developed by Drs. Nicholas Long, Frank Fecser, and Mary Wood, and has been delivered by highly qualified instructors to nearly 20,000 staff across the world. Regular education and special education teachers, classroom and bus aides, support room staff, guidance counselors, administrators, social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists in more than 15 countries have benefited from the training.

The LSCI Institute offers three levels of training:

Foundation Skills (1 day for all staff) focuses on understanding the psychology of emotional disturbance, recognizing the lure of power struggles, and using listening skills to help students tell their stories. Continuing Education Units are available.

Basic LSCI Skills (2 days for classroom aides and teachers) begins with the Foundation Skills training above, then develops the counseling skills needed to process with youth who displace angry feelings about home and neighborhood issues onto staff or other students, or misperceive others' meaning because of distorted personal beliefs. Continuing Education Units are available.

Advanced LSCI Skills (5 days for special educators, administrators, and counseling staff) builds on the Foundation and Basic LSCI Skills, teaching the specific diagnostic and reclaiming skills required to process with youth who:

1. Displace angry feelings about home issues onto staff or other students.
2. Misperceive others' meaning because of distorted personal beliefs.
3. Get confused by peer rejection experienced due to limited social skills.
4. Easily justify harmful actions with little guilt or responsibility.
5. Punish or demean themselves for minor mistakes.
6. Allow themselves to be manipulated by false friends or antagonized by peers.

The Advanced LSCI Skills training also helps staff develop deeper insight into their own issues in crisis, and offers an opportunity to earn three graduate credits in either special education or psychology. A written and practical exam are required to earn LSCI Certification. Continuing Education Units are available.

TRAINING with DR. STEVE PARESE

Regardless of the level, LSCI training is a dynamic learning experience. Each day is filled with insightful and informative mini-lectures, highly focused small group discussions, and deliberate applications to the agency or school being trained. The content is enlivened with entertaining video clips, concise and colorful PowerPoint presentations, carefully coached skill practice sessions, and numerous thought-provoking team-building activities. This varied approach serves to help staff confidently master the academic material, while subtly challenging unproductive perspectives on troubled youth.

Dr. Steve Parese, a Master Trainer with the LSCI Institute, is one of the nation's most experienced instructors in this program. A longtime student of Dr. Nicholas Long, Parese has trained LSCI for more than 15 years across much of the country, including Maryland, Virginia, New Hampshire, and Alaska, and internationally in New Zealand. A well-regarded national speaker and author, he is a specialist in cognitive-behavioral interventions and creator of the Therapeutic Aggression Control Techniques (TACT-2) program.

More information about LSCI may be found by visiting www.LSCI.org or www.TACT2.com, or by contacting Dr. Steve Parese directly at SBParese@aol.com or (336) 593-3533.