

Behavioral Crisis

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Below is a step-by-step guide adapted from the Crisis Prevention Institute for child welfare professionals to use during a behavioral crisis. If you find a child regularly in crisis, please ask your child's therapist and professional team/CFT for more support. The steps below are most effective when used with the support of a professional team.

01

Remain Calm. Check-in to self-regulate yourself.

02

Remove the child from the agitating environment, situation, or individual. If you can't move the child, remove the audience.

03

Validate. Focus on feelings.

- "I know this is hard," "This doesn't feel fair," "You seem angry/ frustrated/sad/scared, and that feeling is OK."

04

Offer choices.

- Give 2 or 3 simple, clear options.
- Offer coping skills, such as deep breathing.
- Explain the consequences of each choice, including continuing their current behavior.

05

Give child space, time and provide calm, comforting reassurance.

- Children often need a moment to process and decide which option to choose. When providing space, continue to monitor the child to ensure safety and show that you will remain committed despite behaviors.
- Access emergency plan — If there is serious threat of harm to the child or others, it is time to involve crisis or emergency services. If you need to call 911, request that the dispatcher informs the first responder that the child is a victim of trauma so they respond appropriately.
- De-brief — Once the child is calm, you can work to focus on your relationship and process feelings.