Hunting and Gathering Information: A Balanced Approach to Crisis Assessment

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Objectives

- Recognize the logic of gathering information on assessment instruments
- Recognize the importance of hunting for culturally relevant information using a logical format
- Gain an appreciation for balancing and synthesizing all information gathered in assessing the magnitude of an individual’s perceived crisis state
- (have some fun)
An introduction to science

What? You just said on the last slide that we were going to have fun!!

- I wonder; I think; I’m going to find out; Man, look what I found!; I’m going to go tell someone! (Quantitative)

- I wonder; I’m going to go find out; Man, look at what I found; I think; I’m going to go tell someone! (Qualitative)

- Assessment: We wonder; let’s find out; we think; here are some things that can be done
So let’s break it down

- I wonder: (research question)
  - Entering into a situation with curiosity
- I think: (hypothesis) (building grounded theory)
  - Using theory or logic from data that will drive action
- I’m going to go find out: (data collection)
  - Using instruments or interviews in order to gather information
- Look at what I found!: (data analysis)
  - Making the most out the information you have gathered
- I’m going to go tell someone: (dissemination of information)
  - Why do all of this if the community/individual isn’t going to benefit?
So why do you care about science?

- The answer is in the methods.
- If people came to you because they needed a friend you could refer them to Facebook or match.com.
- It helps if you know why you do what you do – not just that you have to do it.
- In assessment you use a structured method that has logic behind it.
  - **BUT REMEMBER:** you are leading your partner (the client) in the process.
  - We wonder; let's find out; we think; here are some things that can be done.
  - What? That sounds a lot like science... no... that's being a good clinician.
Assessment instruments/tools

- Assessment instruments are wonderful tools
- Constructed using a theory
- Validated with specific populations
The worth of tools

- If you roll up a Beck Depression Inventory and try and hammer in a nail you aren’t going to get very far!
- Assessment instruments are simply tools to be used by clinicians
- The clinician cannot be removed from the assessment equation
  - Tool choice (validity, reliability, target population)
  - Tool interpretation
Knowing your instruments

- Some person(s) created the instrument that you use in your assessments
- Here are the steps:
  - Hey there needs to be an instrument to assess a person’s crisis state
  - I’m going to see what’s in the literature on states of crisis
  - Man, I just found the coolest stuff from Lazarus and Folkman (1984) on stress theory that I believe fits EXACTLY what I mean when I talk about states of crisis
  - I’m going to create a bunch of sentences/items that will capture that theory
  - I can get some folks who are experts to see if my items are correct, then
  - I can get a bunch of college students to take the survey and publish my article and become rich and famous and be known all over the world…
The Crisis State Assessment Scale focuses on the subjective state that a person faces as a result of a stressor.

Contends that the degree of a crisis, which is a psychological state, is mediated by thoughts about the magnitude of a stressful life experience and thoughts about whether or not a person can cope with the stressful life experience.

Crisis state = magnitude of the event – coping ability
Crisis state is an internal disequilibrium resulting from perceived psychological trauma and perceived problems in coping efficacy.

- **Perceived psychological trauma**
  - An individual’s unique perception of an event or enduring conditions that leads the individual to believe that his or her physical life, way of life, or sanity is in jeopardy

- **Perceived problems in coping efficacy**
  - An individual’s belief that he or she cannot effectively master the demands of a traumatic condition, threat, or challenge because it exceeds his or her resources
In the box below please write down a very brief description of the traumatic event(s)/situation that you will be referring to while answering the questions on this scale.

**Traumatic event(s)/Situation:**

1 = Never  2 = Very rarely  3 = Rarely  4 = Sometimes  5 = Often  6 = Almost always  7 = Always

- I think about the event/situation when I don’t want to.
- I feel like the event/situation throws my life off balance.
- I feel like my physical or emotional well-being is threatened by the event/situation.
- The event/situation is very distressing to me.
- The event/situation makes me feel like I am going crazy.
- I feel like I don’t have the resources and/or energy to deal with the event/situation.
- I don’t know what to do to make this event/situation manageable.
- I feel like I cannot handle the event/situation.
- I don’t deal well with events/situations like this one.
- I am confident that I can cope with the event/situation.

Imagine that you are facing the easiest situation that you have ever experienced, consider that feeling a 0. Now imagine that you are facing the most difficult situation that you have ever experienced in your lifetime, consider that a 10. On a scale from one to ten indicate the difficulty of the event(s)/situation described above by circling a number below:

Easy : 0  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10 : Most difficult
Cultural context

By this time you can tell that I have my own personal style – we all do – it’s just that mine is obvious.

The person in front of you might not speak the same language as the scale – yes it might be English but not the kind that Professor Whoever speaks.

Hearing the voice of the person in front of you – that is where you come in.

Remember, instruments are tools to be used by you – not used to replace you.

Knowing the logic of the instrument allows you to use your clinical skills to determine if the true voice of the client is being picked up.
We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less with that missing drop.

Mother Teresa