



## CRISIS INTERVENTION PROTOCOL

Welcome to **The Counseling Room LLC**! I look forward to working with you to achieve your therapeutic goals. First, let us review some important information and guidelines about how The Counseling Room will intervene during a crisis.

**What is a Crisis?** A crisis is any situation in which a person feels overwhelmed with their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Crisis situations may be in the form of mental health concerns (e.g., psychosis, mania), natural disasters, school bullying, the sudden death of a loved one, loss of job, divorce, children leaving home, pregnancy, acts of violence, etc.

**Common Responses During a Crisis** include, but are not limited to:

1. Bizarre Thinking & Behavior (e.g., hearing voices or seeing things that other people do not hear or see)
2. Depressed Mood (e.g., crying almost every day, loss of appetite, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness)
3. Unusually Elevated Mood (e.g., lots of energy that may result in insomnia, working on tasks for long periods of time without eating or bathing, risky behaviors such as drug abuse, indiscriminate spending of money, unprotected sex, etc.)
4. Thoughts of Harming or Killing Oneself
5. Thoughts of Harming or Killing Someone Else
6. Inability to Perform Activities of Daily Living (e.g., hygiene, cooking, cleaning, etc.)

**Crisis Counseling** The goal of crisis counseling is to reduce the overwhelming—and many times—harmful thinking patterns, feelings, behaviors a person may have/engage in during a crisis. Ideally, the counselor and client can work together to bring about stabilization of thoughts and feelings within the time allotted for the counseling session (e.g., 1 hour). However, sometimes it may take longer to achieve stabilization. In such cases, another type of assistance is needed.

**Baker Act** is the admittance of a person experiencing a crisis into a hospital setting (i.e., Baker Act Receiving Facility-BARF) to bring about stabilization of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. When the Baker Act is initiated, the person will be assessed by a psychiatrist or other medical professional. The purpose of the assessment is to determine how severe the overwhelming thoughts and emotions are, as well as develop a course of action to best stabilize the individual. This course of action may or may not include medication. Upon stabilization and a demonstrated ability to make adaptive decisions for him or herself, the individual will be discharged from the hospital setting and able to return home.

There are two types of Baker Act:

1. **Voluntary Baker Act** If a person is experiencing a crisis AND is capable of making sound decisions, he or she will be transported to a Baker Act Receiving Facility (BARF) with their formal consent. In such a situation, the person can request transportation to a BARF by police, transport themselves, or have a trusted adult transport them.
2. **Involuntary Baker Act** If a person is experiencing a crisis AND is incapable of making sound decisions, he or she will be transported to a Baker Act Receiving Facility (BARF) without their formal consent. In such a situation, the following three criteria are met:
  - 1) There is reason to believe that he or she is mentally ill. This means an impairment of the mental or emotional processes that exercise conscious control of one's actions or of the ability to perceive or understand reality, which impairment substantially interferes with a person's ability to meet the ordinary demands of living
  - 2) Because of his or her mental illness the person has refused voluntary examination or is unable to determine whether examination is necessary
  - 3) Without care or treatment, the person is likely to suffer from neglect resulting in real and present threat of substantial harm that cannot be avoided through the help of others; or there is substantial likelihood that without care or treatment the person will cause serious bodily harm to self or others in the near future

In the case of individuals under the age of 18, a legal guardian must provide the necessary consent for both voluntary and involuntary Baker Acts.

For more details on the Baker Act process, please visit:

<https://www.usf.edu/cbcs/baker-act/documents/bakeractcriteriaprocesses.pdf>

### **What Happens at The Counseling Room LLC**

**If a client meets the criteria for a Voluntary Baker Act**, he or she can request transportation to a BARF by police, transport themselves, or have a trusted adult transport them. If the client is a minor, he or she must be transported by legal guardian or by a trusted adult the guardian consents to.

**If a client meets the criteria for an Involuntary Baker Act**, The Counseling Room will arrange for the client to be transported to a BARF by police. If the client is a minor, he or she can be transported to a BARF by the legal guardian or by a trusted adult--with legal guardian's consent—only if it is safe to do so. If there are safety concerns surrounding the transportation of a minor, a police transport will be arranged by The Counseling Room.

The counselor will arrange client's transport to BARF by contacting the local police via telephone. While the counselor makes this telephone call, the virtual session with client (i.e., video call) remains active and client is expected to remain within the counselor's visual span on the video call (i.e., counselor must not lose sight of the client). The virtual session with client will end after the counselor receives confirmation from dispatcher and/or police that an officer has arrived at the home and is in contact with the client.

As such, to best assist clients experiencing a crisis, The Counseling Room will always ask for the physical address of where the client is located at the time of the counseling session. This information will be requested of all clients (adults and minors)—individual, couple, and family--at the beginning of each session. Whether or not a crisis is taking place, this information will be requested as a precaution. Failure to provide this information will result in the counselor immediately ending the session.

If client continues to evade the counselor's attempt of securing an address in the next scheduled session, the counselor reserves the right to unilaterally terminate the counselor-client relationship. Moreover, if the counselor suspects a crisis is taking place but was not provided the current location of the client, the counselor reserves the right to request a Wellness Check--which is carried out by the local police--using the address on file (i.e., address provided on the *Client Intake Form*).

Should there be any questions or concerns, please contact The Counseling Room LLC directly by email at [info@thecounselingroomllc.com](mailto:info@thecounselingroomllc.com) or by telephone at 305-316-2059. Thank you!