Emotional CPR

Goal: To train people to assist others through emotional crisis and to make this practice accessible to people around the world.

www.emotional-cpr.org

What is eCPR?

Emotional CPR (eCPR) is a public health education program designed to teach people to assist others through an emotional crisis by three simple steps:

C = Connecting  P = emPowering  R = Revitalizing

The Connecting process of eCPR involves deepening listening skills, practicing presence, and creating a sense of safety for the person experiencing a crisis. The emPowering process helps people to feel more hopeful and engaged in life. In the Revitalizing process, people reengage in relationships with their loved ones or their support system, and they resume or begin routines that support health and wellness.

eCPR is based on the principles shared by a number of support approaches: trauma-informed care, recovery components, instilling hope, counseling after disasters, peer support, and cultural and social attunement. It was developed with input from a diverse cadre of leaders who themselves have learned how to recover and grow from emotional crises.
**Connecting Skills**

Be humble, curious, and respectful. Avoid assumptions and become interested in what the person in crisis means by their behavior.

Believe in the person’s ability to overcome this challenge. People can overcome all kinds of stress and trauma. While they may feel confused or frightened in the short term, affirm that you believe in their ability to heal.

Listen with the heart instead of the head. Practice shutting off your stream of thoughts and open your heart to the person in distress.

Meet people where they are. Be mindful of the person’s body language, posture, and tone. Do your best to remain calm, relaxing your body and opening your heart. This helps the person in crisis begin to relax.

**empowering Skills**

Emotional distress can be an opportunity for growth. Through eCPR, we help people feel safe to begin to make the shift from anger and distress to passion and power.

**empowering skills include:**

- Entering into a collaborative “power with” as opposed to “power over” relationship.
- Exercising mutuality by asking the person in distress to describe what “help” looks like.

Facilitating the person’s shift from hopelessness to planning for the future.

**some questions to ask:**

1) What do you want your life to look like?
2) What’s the next important thing you can do now?
3) What support do you need to accomplish that?

Encourage the person to identify self-care in areas including exercise, food, sleep, spirituality, and social activities.

**Revitalizing Skills**

Many people who experience crisis realize later that the crisis provided an opportunity to make a change in their lives, to try something new that was more congruent with their life’s purpose.

**Revitalizing skills include:**

- Helping to identify and connect to the “vital center” that brings meaning and purpose to a person’s life.
- Encouraging another to take small steps in the direction of their dreams.
- Facilitating connections in the community to enhance or reestablish roles, relationships, and routines.