



Dealing with Unrelenting Crisis and Inhibited Grieving in Your Loved One with Borderline Personality Disorder

NEA-BPD

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Unrelenting Crisis versus Inhibited Grieving

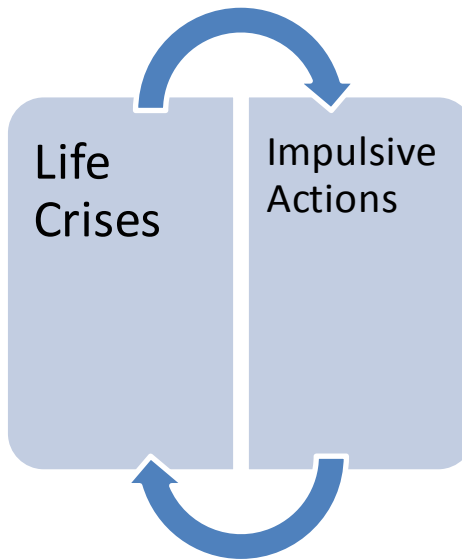
- Are opposite poles of the same behavioral patterns
- People often bounce back and forth between the two
- Environments can either vacillate between the poles also



Unrelenting Crisis

Unrelenting Crisis: “Everything is out of control”

- Impulsive reactions to life’s problems
- Trying to end crises in ways that create more crises
- Chronic crisis



The end result of poor judgment, poor problem solving and an inability to tolerate distress

What is Unrelenting Crisis?

- Crisis builds
- One “bad” situation (many times not of their own making)
- Inability to tolerate the distress of the situation
- Leads them to make ineffective decisions OR
- Engage in impulsive behavior to relieve stress
- Makes situation worse

How does unrelenting crisis happen

- **Poor problem solving**
 - Problem solving is usually modeled
 - Chronic emotionality makes modeling not experienced
- **Inadequate distress tolerance**
 - Emotionality so high that other people's distress tolerance skills “don't work”

Responding to Unrelenting Crisis

- Encourage your loved one to get professional help
- Whenever possible, help him regulate emotion
- Help with problem solving
- Encourage distress tolerance:
 - Distracting
 - Looking at pros and cons before engaging in a behavior
 - Accessing “wise mind”



Problem Solving Skills

- Define the problem
- Define the goal of problem solving
- Brainstorm solutions
- Choose a solution
- Troubleshoot the solution
- Implement the solution
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the solution

When your loved one is in Unrelenting Crisis remind yourself...

- Your loved one is doing the best she can.
- If there were other solutions readily available, she would choose them
- She is trying to relieve suffering



Inhibited Grieving

Inhibited Grieving: “I’m not feeling anything.”

- People with BPD become sensitized to loss
 - Compounding of loss over time
 - Reactive to cues related to new/old loss
 - Reactive to real or imagined loss
- People with BPD stop processing loss. They don’t recover.
- Overwhelming sadness plus avoidance of emotion
- Belief that the emotion will never end or they will be destroyed by it

Recognizing Inhibited Grieving

- Lack of facial expression
- Lack of emotional body language
- Lack of emotional language: “I don’t feel anything”
- Avoidance of external cues for emotion
- Avoidance of internal cues for emotion: “I don’t do sadness”
- Difference between Apparent Competence and Inhibited Grieving:
 - Apparent Competence : she verbally expresses the emotion but doesn’t show it
 - Inhibited Grieving: she doesn’t express or experience the emotion

Responding to Inhibited Grieving

- Validate the emotion that your loved one would be likely to experience
- Validate how hard it is to experience some emotions
- Don't remove cues or reinforce avoidance
- Generate hope that he can survive the emotion that a situation would cue
- Accept your own relief at lack of emotional response (especially after a period of unrelenting crisis)
- Exposure therapy—getting professionals involved



Paying Attention to Your Responses

- Loved ones can also respond with unrelenting crisis or with inhibited grieving
- What do these look like?
- Using what you know to keep from having extreme responses

In Conclusion

- When she's emotional... Validate
- When you're emotional... Regulate your own emotion
- When hopeless... Get support
- When impatient... Remember incremental change
- When helping... Don't treat her as fragile AND don't withhold help that you would give anyone else
- When in doubt... Use the humane response

Contact Information

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