

Managing and Deescalating Crisis: A Developmental and Person Centered Approach

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THE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Crisis Intervention

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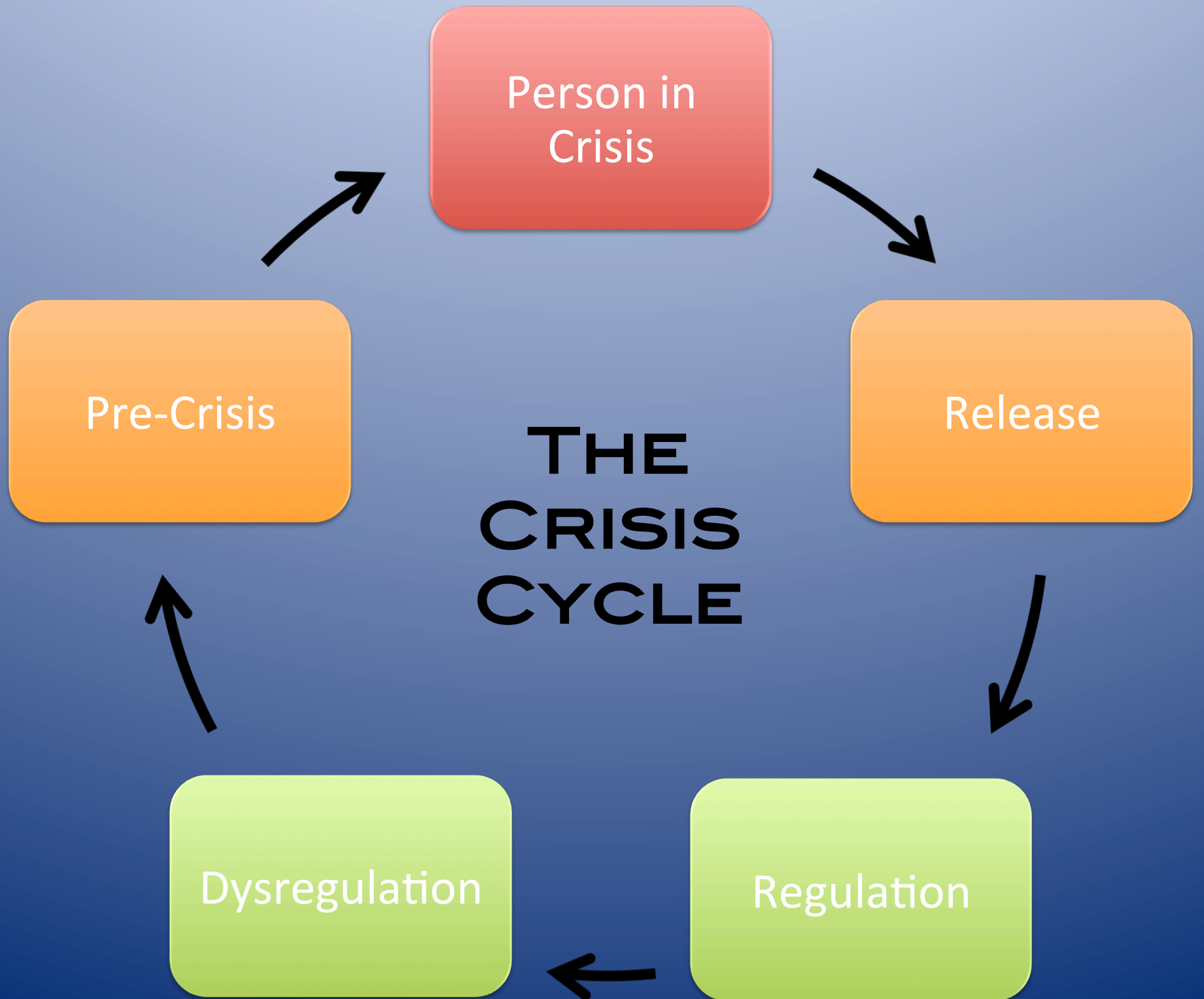
Presentation Overview

A stack of five smooth, dark grey stones balanced on top of each other, set against a light blue background. The stones are arranged in a slightly offset, top-down fashion, creating a sense of balance and stability.

What is the general approach?

What are the stages of the crisis cycle?

**What can you do to anticipate, support,
and stay connected?**



Core to Approach



Join

Support

Reconnect

Core to Approach

Join

- Assess Situation
- Empathize
- Express Feeling and Ideas

Core to Approach

Support

- Act using best practices
- Initiate help from others
- Move towards de-escalation
- Intentional intervention

Core to Approach

Reconnect

- Repair Relationship
- Process Events
- Problem Solve
- Co-create a plan for future

DYSREGULATION

Change or increase/decrease in mood,
behavior, skills, functional/emotional
capacity, etc

Venting, yelling, sensory sensitivity
(seeking or avoiding)

Dysregulation

Join

- **Empathize**
 - Put yourself in their shoes
 - Identify and validate emotion “That would frustrate me, too.”
- **Consider sensory responses**
 - What does their body need?
 - Movement, rest, quiet, darkness
- **Consider processing abilities**
 - Language is concrete, simple and warm
 - Low visual or auditory stimulus

Dysregulation

Support

- **Encourage**
 - Give few directives, allow for failure
 - “You can do it, you almost have it”
- **Negotiate, compromise, debate**
 - Encourage using others, advocating for help
 - “**Who can help you with this?**”
 - “What should the rule be?”
 - “How much longer do you think we could stay?”
- **Extend conversation: hold emotion with affect**
 - Words, Affect, Action
 - “It seems like you don’t think it’s fair.”
 - “Wow! You’ve been thinking about this a lot!”

Dysregulation

Reconnect

- Calm and Soothe
 - Stay & remain centered and intentional
 - Avoid power struggles
- Redirect & Set Boundaries
 - “Let’s go back to what we were working on just now.”
 - “Let’s do that during the last five minutes of class.”
- Allow to Vent
 - Feeling heard and understood is the most regulating process for us all
- Use familiar interactions, routines, calming activity or person

Dysregulation

Overview

- Modulate affect to co-regulate
- Maintain reciprocity
- Help to regulate emotions before problem solving

**The goal is not to be calm
ALL the time**

PRE-CRISIS

Loss of some rationality, refusal, defiance

Threatening to self and/or others

Pre-Crisis

Join

- **Identify and name motivations**
 - What is driving the individual?
 - What is their underlying need and what barriers exist to them achieving it?
 - “It seems really important to you that...”
- **Consider safety issues**
 - Survey environment
 - Anticipate escalation

Pre-Crisis

Support

- Give concrete information
 - Clarify the limits and rules and expectations
 - This is NOT about threats or using fear to manage behavior
 - This is about empowering individuals
 - “If you continue to scratch yourself, I’ll use my hands to stop you.”
 - “Phones aren’t allowed at dinner; you can use it when we’re done.”
- Narrate what you are doing
 - This creates a sense of safety and removes burden of choice
 - “Jane is scared, so I’m asking her to leave the room.”
 - “This seems too hard right now, so we’re going to stop.”

Pre-Crisis

Support

- Give solutions & offer simple choices
 - Do not try complex problem solving
 - Offer choices in the positive – what they CAN do, rather than detailing the limits
 - “You can watch a video or get a snack.”
- State consequences, likely outcomes
 - Use reality and be as honest and flexible as possible
 - Very few circumstances are “high stakes”
 - Do not see these as punishments for behavior, rather natural cause-effect outcomes of a response to a situation
 - “If we stay here, we’ll miss our movie.”
- Assume verbal threats are serious & prelude to action

Pre-Crisis

Reconnect

- Focus on building an alliance
 - “We’re in this together and we’ll figure it out.”
- Allow the opportunity to repair the relationship
 - “We’ll try again tomorrow.”
 - “Join again when you’re ready.”
- Acknowledge and validate the difficulty and challenge
 - Be honest about your own experience of the relationship
 - “I am really scared and worried about you.”

Pre-Crisis

Overview

- Be Direct & Concrete
 - Don't overshoot what someone is capable of in this state
- Be Open, Authentic & Flexible
 - Recognize what is really on the line and prioritize the relationship
 - Avoid power dynamics
- Work towards moving someone back towards dysregulation and then regulation

Person in Crisis

Total loss of rationality

A danger to themselves and/ or others

Intense emotionality (anger, sadness, panic, mania, hopelessness)

Breakdown in Sense → Emote → Think → Act Cycle

Person in Crisis

Join

- Assess situation if you are new to it
 - Others involved
 - Environment
- Recognize loss of thinking and control

Person in Crisis

Support

- Don't act beyond your expertise or role
 - Know your limits
- Get expert help
 - 911
 - Crisis Centers
- Non-violent restraint
 - Training is available in this best practice
- Focus on safety
 - Remove others
 - Remove dangers

Person in Crisis

Support

- Lower cognitive demands
 - No questions
 - Empathic noises
 - Direct, concrete statements
- Manage environment
 - Reduce sensory input
 - Decrease physical demands
- Follow crisis plan
 - May call for specific interventions

Person in Crisis

Reconnect

- De-escalation from Crisis (backwards through Pre-Crisis and Dysregulation) is not possible
- Move to Release and Recovery

Person in Crisis



Overview

- Safety comes first
 - Yours, others, theirs
 - Lower priorities – possessions, appearance, control
- Team approach
- Empathy & compassion
- Know yourself and your role
- Have and implement crisis plan

Release

Tension/Emotional Release

Post flight/fight/flee response – exhaustion, hunger, thirst, shaking, sensory dullness

Emotional reaction – guilt, remorse, avoidance/
withdrawal

Release

Join

- Slowly establish sustained back and forth interaction – reciprocity
- Allow time for body to re-equilibrate and facilitate this where possible
- Empathize with release
- Check your own experience and get help if needed

Release

Support

- Process the experience:
- Identify subtle graduations of emotion
 - “Were you furious or just a little frustrated?”
 - “How did this compare to last week?”
- Consider possible outcomes
 - “What do you think we should do next?”
 - “What do you think might happen?”
- Don't rush to solve problem

Release

Reconnect

Use praise to re-establish connection:

- Value the process
 - “You have really worked hard to..”
 - “Remember when this was so difficult..”
- Be specific
 - “You are working hard at staying calm when you lose.”
 - “You’ve really improved your endurance on the hikes.”
- Praise efforts
 - “You are trying this in a new way!”
 - “You were able to stay for twenty minutes.”

Release

Overview

- Allow time for tension reduction
- Make sure that you are also ready to re-engage
- Use calming, self-care techniques to establish body equilibrium
- Avoid blame, shame, & problem solving
- Work through “fallout emotions”

RECOVERY



Decrease in physical or emotional energy

Return of rationality

Re-establishment of relationship, shared problem solving, plan for the future

Recovery

Join

- Understand that all parties have had an emotional experience
- Acknowledge both perspectives
- Attitude of non-judgment, acceptance and curiosity
- Don't rush the process – can take days, weeks, months

Recovery

Support

- Less emphasis on doing, correcting
- More emphasis on relationship, understanding, connection
- Fewer hierarchies, lessons, rules/boundaries lead to better long term success

Recovery

Reconnect

- **Clarify their perspective first**
 - Deepen their insight and understanding of their own motivations
 - Empathize with their experience
 - Sequence event
- **Consider perspective of others**
 - Use storyboarding, social stories, replaying

Recovery

Reconnect

- **Enjoy each other**
 - Spend time on preferred activity
 - One-on one Floortime
- **Role-play, storyboard, journal, draw**
 - Sequence event, identify and practice strategies, possible outcomes
- **Create plan for the future**
 - Identify patterns or triggers, plan reintroduction to challenging environments

Recovery

Overview

- Focus on relationship, not behavior
- Take your time
- Accept the cyclical process of crisis



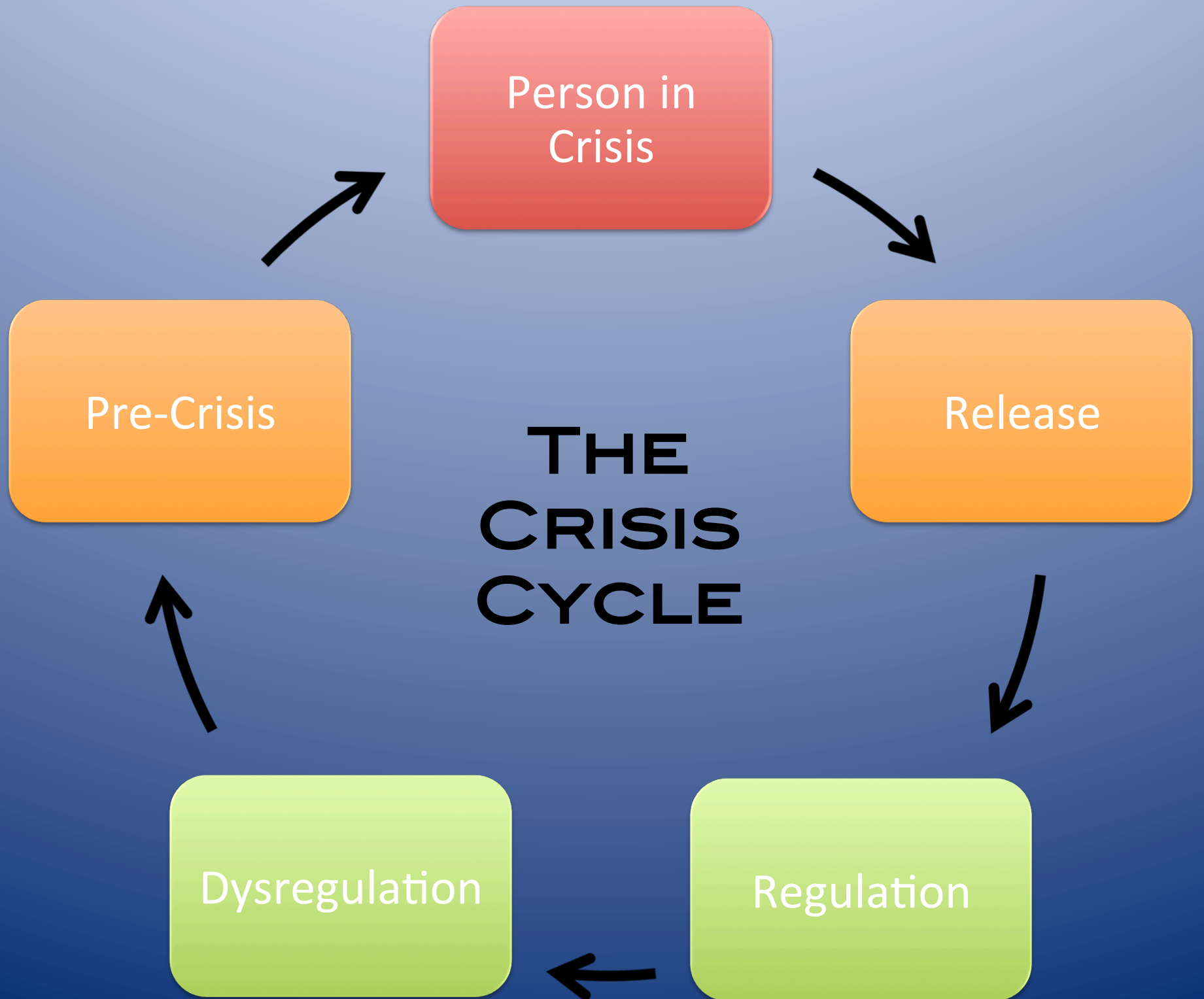
Core to Approach



Join

Support

Reconnect



Person in
Crisis

Pre-Crisis

Release

**THE
CRISIS
CYCLE**

Dysregulation

Regulation