What is “Resolution”? 
Resolution

Question: If the facts haven’t changed, can there be resolution?
Crisis Definitions—Refresher

- A personal difficulty or situation that disables a person. It is also a hardship that can prevent one from controlling his or her life (Belkin, 1984, p. 424).

- An event as that is viewed as unbearable; it is also one that exceeds a person’s usual resources and coping mechanisms (Gilliland & James, 1997, p.3).

- “A state of disorganization in which people face frustration of important life goals or profound disruption of their life cycles and methods of coping with stressors” (Brammer, 1985, p.94)
Crisis Definitions—Refresher

- An event made up of three parts: 1) a precipitating event; 2) a perception of the event that leads to distress; and 3) the failure of usual coping mechanisms, which lead to a decreased level of functioning (Kanel, 2003, p.1).

- A period of psychological disequilibrium, experienced as a result of a hazardous event or situation that constitutes a significant problem that cannot be remedied by using familiar coping strategies. (A. Roberts, 2000)
Crisis Definitions—Refresher

- Crisis presents both a danger and an opportunity. Vulnerability/risk and growth potential are both present.
- Crisis is universal because no one is immune to crisis in the right circumstances.
- It is idiosyncratic because what one person can successfully overcome, another cannot even though the circumstances are identical.
- The crisis is not merely the situation itself, rather it is the person’ perception of and response to the situation. (Parad, 1971)
The following characterize a person in crisis:

- Perceiving a precipitating event as being meaningful and threatening
- Appearing unable to modify or lessen the impact of stressful events with traditional coping methods (previously successful coping strategies are ineffective)
- Experiencing increased fear, tension, and/or discomfort
- Exhibiting a high level of subjective discomfort
- Proceeding rapidly to an active state of crisis—a state of disequilibrium.

(A. Roberts, 2000)
Resolution

- The Act or process of RESOLVING: as
  - The act of analyzing a complex notion into simpler ones
  - The act of answering: SOLVING
  - The act of determining

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Resolution

- The condition or quality of being resolute; firmness or determination
- Something resolved or determined; decision
- Return from a pathological to a normal condition
The Art of Resolution-Focused Work

- Use of resolution-focused interventions is key in shifting practice away from a level of care determination and to an intervention that, when effective, reduces the need for higher levels of care.

- This style of intervention serves to “deconstruct” the nature of the crisis,

- Gives good information to the person in crisis and the crisis team, AND

- Leads to highly individualized and collaborative solutions and continuity of care activities.
The Art of Resolution-Focused Work

- Delivered with a mindset that “the person in crisis is the only ‘knower’ and the ‘expert’ of his/her unique experiences, realities and aspirations.” (Cantwell/Holmes, 1994)

- The optimal resolution is the one that feels right to the youth and family
The Art of Resolution-Focused Work

- When you weave solution-focused and problem-solving techniques into the assessment and mental status exam, it guides the intervention away from “pathologizing” and towards identifying solutions.
- It brings context to the nature of the symptom (sadness, inattention, suicidal ideation, judgment).
- It aids a person in crisis in shifting from an emotive (chaotic) state to a cognitive (problem-solving) state.
- If the shift is NOT sufficiently forthcoming, it can serve to clarify the need for a more intensive level of care.
The Art of Resolution-Focused Work

- Deconstructing and bringing clarity to a crisis event (identifying the ‘toxin’) involves:
  - Defining the nature of the crisis
  - Identifying associated thoughts
  - Identifying associated behaviors
  - Identifying associated risks
The Art of Resolution-Focused Work

And then identifying the potential antidotes:

“A remedy or other agent used to neutralize the effects of a poison”

“An agent that relieves or counteracts”
Resolution-Focused Interventions

- **Antidotes for crisis**
  - Structure is the antidote for chaos
  - Cognition for excessive emotion
  - Catharsis/disclosure for tension
  - Understanding for loss of control
  - Action for helplessness.
Where is the opportunity for resolution in the definitions below?

- A personal difficulty or situation that disables a person. It is also a hardship that can prevent one from controlling his or her life (Belkin, 1984, p. 424).

- An event as that is viewed as unbearable; it is also one that exceeds a person’s usual resources and coping mechanisms (Gilliland & James, 1997, p.3).

- “A state of disorganization in which people face frustration of important life goals or profound disruption of their life cycles and methods of coping with stressors” (Brammer, 1985, p.94)
What are the opportunities for resolution in this definition?

The following characterize a person in crisis:

- Perceiving a precipitating event as being meaningful and threatening
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(A. Roberts, 2000)
What are the opportunities for resolution

- For Louie, his parents, and teacher?
- For Esperanza and her parents?
QUESTION: Is a referral to the appropriate level of care an example of “resolution”?
The Art of Resolution-Focused Work

- Recognizing the need and changing (when indicated) the “energy” of the intervention through engagement and joining with each key party

- Sensing where to start first
  - What person(s)
  - What topic
  - What approach

- What is the antidote that is most likely to bring relief?
The Art of Resolution-Focused Work

Look back at the story of Esperanza

- What seems to be the “energy” of the situation?
- How does that inform
  - Where to start?
  - On what topic?
- What “antidote” might bring relief?
- What are the key activities for the clinician?
- What are the key activities for the Family Partner/Paraprofessional?
The Art of Resolution-Focused Work

- Believing in the ability of people to recover
- Seeing strength and expertise in the child and family
- Believing that child/family are own best experts. I can never know their thinking, I can never feel their bodies’ reactions to questions or suggestions—they have to tap into that and inform the decision made by the family-inclusive team
- Preserving dignity, even in tough moments
- Respecting of perspective, stage, the humanness of situation, choice