

The Utility of Crisis Intervention in Addressing AWOL from Out-of-Home Placement Settings

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Agenda

This workshop frames AWOL as a maladaptive coping response in youth who are vulnerable to the experience of out-of-home placement as a crisis-inducing event, enabling new intervention strategies.

The Issue of AWOL from Out-of-Home Placement

Current Approaches to Addressing AWOL

Crisis Intervention as a Treatment Approach

Applying Crisis Intervention to AWOL

THE ISSUE OF AWOL FROM OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

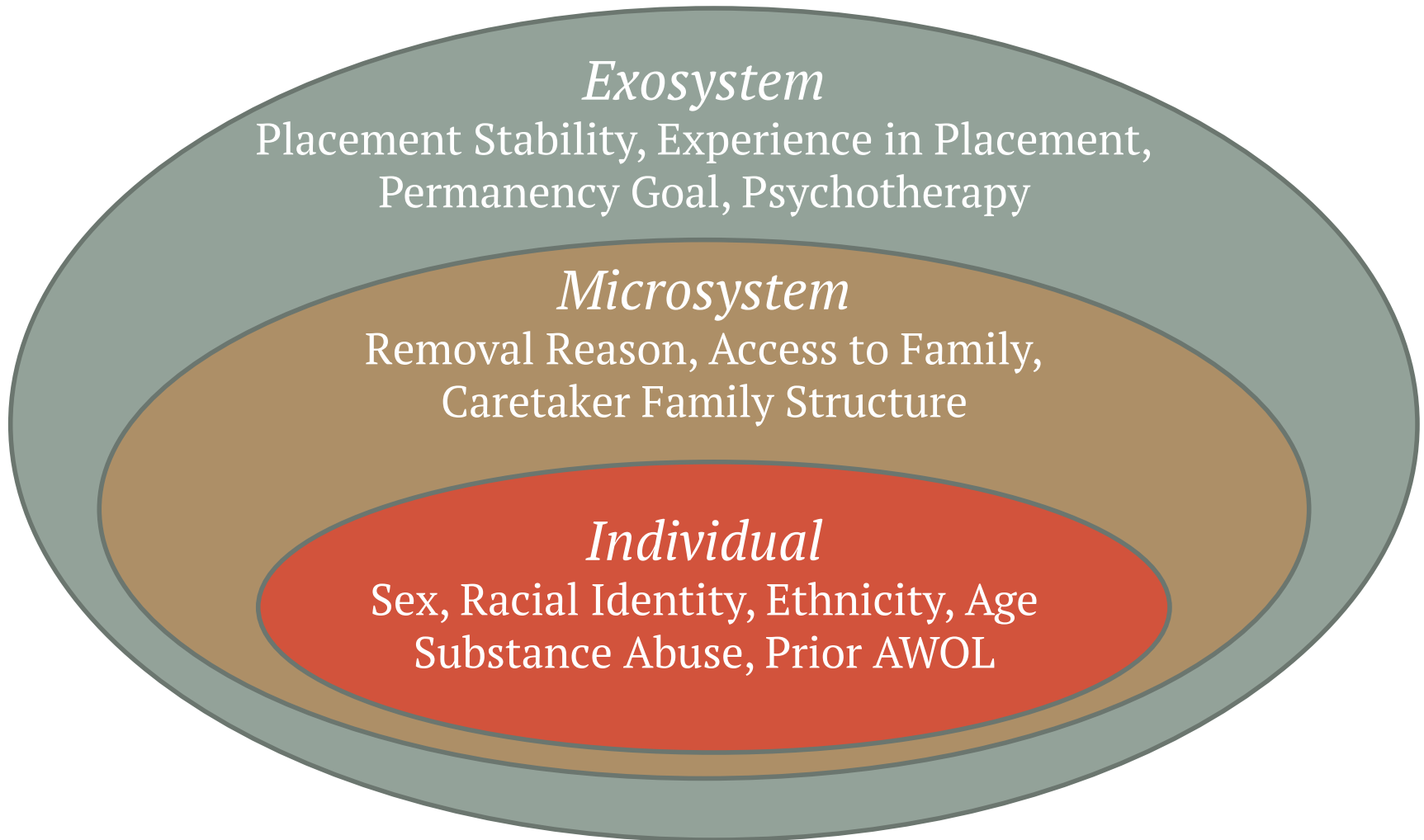
The Issue of AWOL

Dangerous for Youth

Difficult for Staff

Disruptive for Peers

Risk Factors



CURRENT APPROACHES TO ADDRESSING AWOL

Placement Setting Strategies

Reducing downtime through recreational opportunities and other activities.

Prioritizing feelings of safety and connections with staff.

Group counseling sessions targeting time periods where AWOL risk is heightened.

Risk and Prevention

This is a common approach due to the availability of data that enables the identification of AWOL risk factors.

Helps us understand which youth are more likely to AWOL.

Lacks guidance on how to intervene when an at-risk youth is identified.

Does not enable insight into why some youth AWOL.

Behavioral Approach



CRISIS INTERVENTION AS A TREATMENT APPROACH

Crisis Intervention



How We Define Crisis

A
Hazardous
Event

A Threat
to Life
Goals

Inability to
Use Coping
Skills

This yields “disequilibrium” and
crisis ensues.

How We Define Crisis

Certainly, many hazardous events might be understood as objectively crisis-inducing, in that they represent a threat to nearly anyone.

- Severe Physical Injury •
- Sudden Death of a Loved One •
- Life-Threatening Violence •

How We Define Crisis



Crisis Theory Proposal

Several aspects of AWOL suggest that they some AWOL events may result from a state of disequilibrium.

- Spur of the Moment •
- Speediness of AWOL Events •
- Pre-Disposed to Emotional Distress •

Crisis AWOL Study

The described study uses data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). A convenience sample of 15 states is utilized.

National Sample

First-Time Placement Episodes

Adolescents

Recent History of Maltreatment

Study on Crisis AWOL

Racial identity, ethnicity, age, and youth drug abuse predict AWOL in the sample.

Sex is a strong predictor of AWOL but surprisingly did not predict AWOL in the sample.

Youth with reunification goals and youth who receive counseling are less likely to AWOL.

Youth who may be more likely to experience placement as crisis-inducing appear to be less likely to AWOL if they expect to return home, and if they are able to participate in therapy.

APPLYING CRISIS INTERVENTION TO AWOL

Using Crisis Intervention

Not necessarily an issue of safety or de-escalation as we might generally associate with crisis.

- Known Vulnerabilities •
- Placement as a Disruptive Event •
 - Absence of Coping Capacity •

Assessing for Crisis



The Course of Crisis



Most Crises Resolve Themselves
(For Better or Worse)

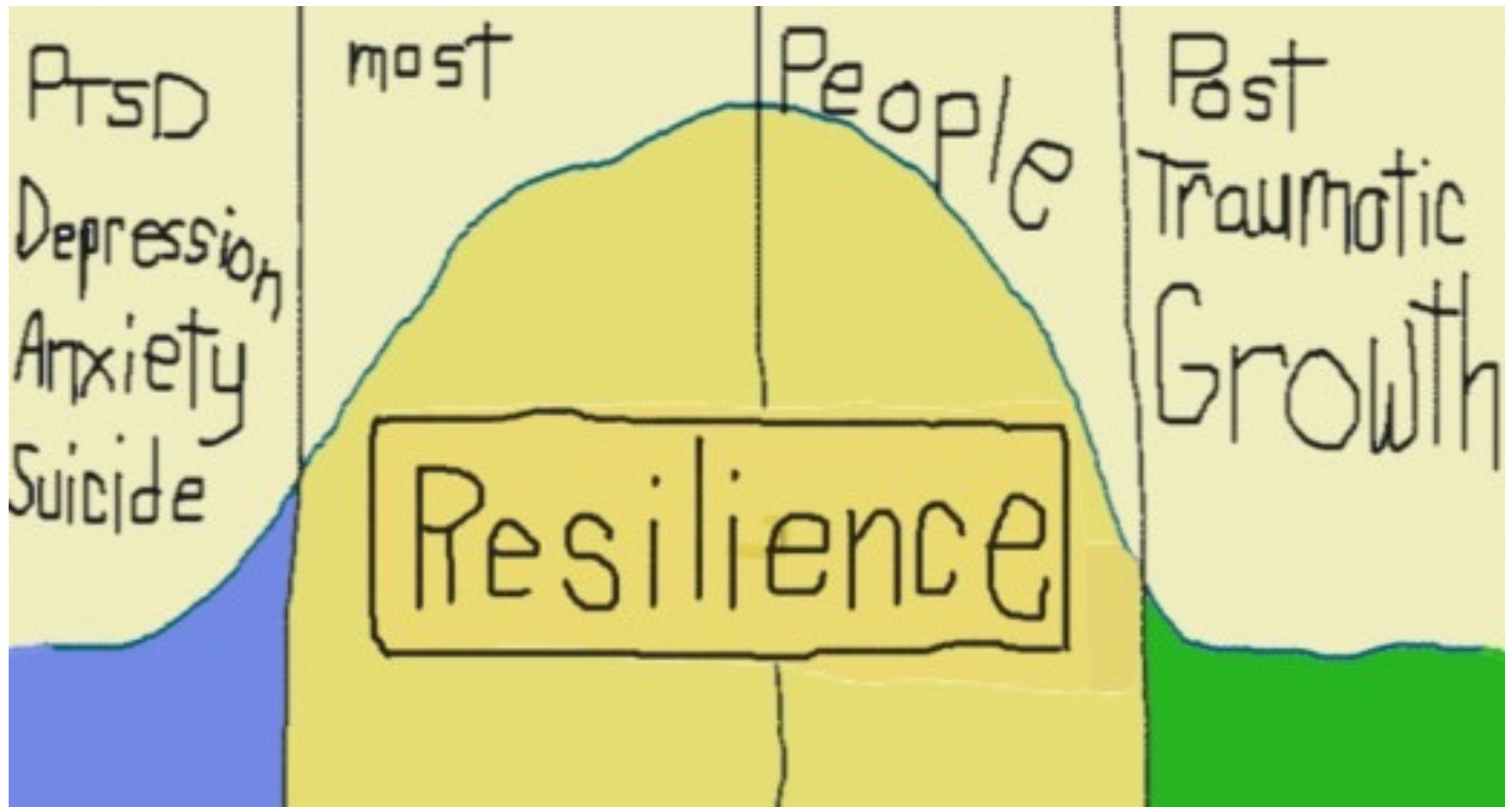


Outcome of Crisis is Not Guaranteed



The Benefits of Timely Intervention

The Course of Crisis



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