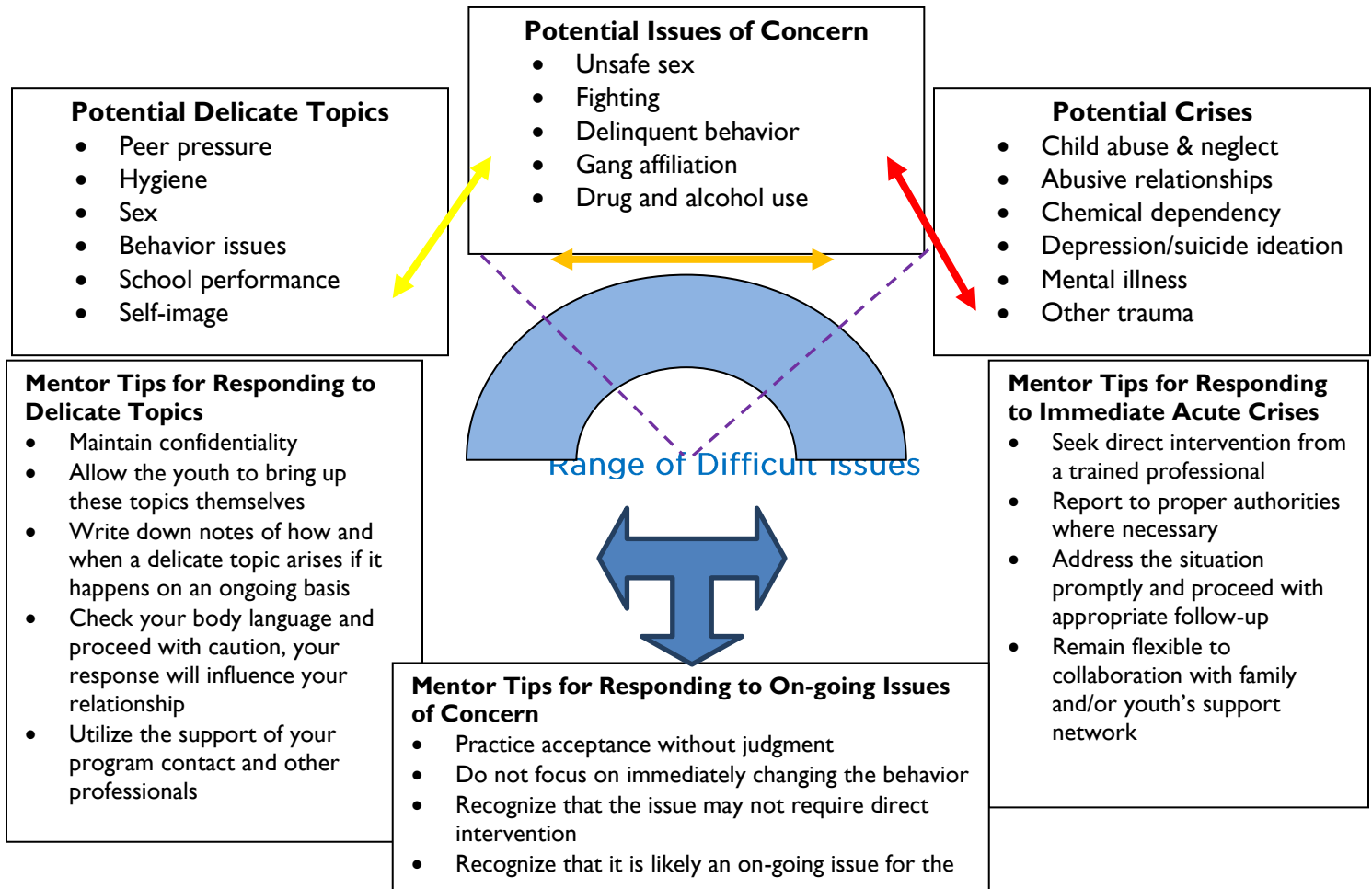


# Range of Issues & Communication in Crises

## Best Practice Resources – Program Management

### Responding to a Range of Difficult Issues in the Mentoring Relationship<sup>1</sup>



**Basic Communication Skills for Difficult Conversations**

**Active Listening** - *Requires focused, intentional energy*

- Listen closely to what is being said, both through words and body language
- Pay attention to the meaning beneath the words

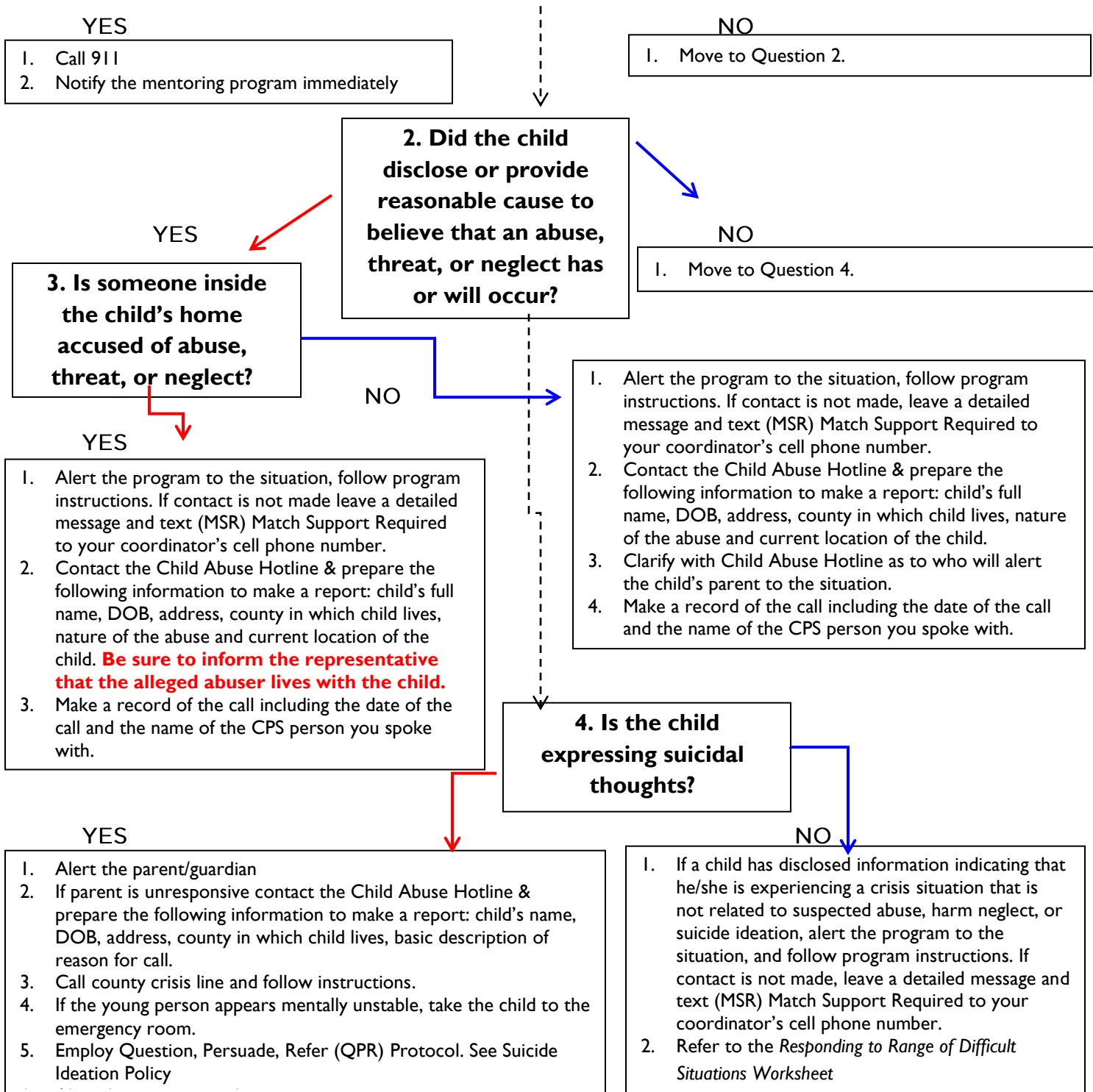
**Paraphrasing** - *A way to demonstrate that you're listening*

- Listen first and reflect back two parts of the other person's message, fact and feeling
- Do not attempt to identify, sympathize, or evaluate when paraphrasing

**Open-Ended Questions** - *Help you share more information*

- Ask questions that cannot be responded to with a yes or no answer
- Utilize questions that are not value laden, and draw a clarifying response





## Sample Suicide Ideation and Severe Depression Policy

We recognize that severe depression and youth suicide are serious and often stigmatized societal issues. Our mentoring program intentionally reaches disconnected youth who often do not feel they fit into the school or community environment and who may be experiencing a general sense of isolation and alienation—the same young people most at-risk of severe depression and suicide. Subsequently, we believe that our responsibility as a positive youth development program includes providing training, tools, and resources to heighten sensitivity to depression and suicide ideation and to provide a proactive response system for students at risk of suicide. To that end, we train program staff, volunteers, and families on the Question Persuade Refer (QPR) protocol for suicide prevention every year. All employees are required to participate in this training within the first 60 days of employment.

### **QPR Protocol**

*Pay attention to suicide clues and warning signs including direct and indirect verbal, behavioral, and situational clues.*

#### **Examples**

Verbal direct: *“I wish I were dead.”*

Verbal indirect: *“I just want out.”*

Behavioral: *Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks.*

Situational: *Loss of any major relationship*

**The greater the number of signs represented the greater the risk. Take all signs seriously.**

#### **Question**

- Have you been really unhappy lately?
- Are you thinking about killing yourself?

#### **Persuade**

- Listen to the problem, give the young person your full attention
- Offer hope in any form then ask: “Will you let me help you get help?”

#### **Refer**

- Take the person directly to someone who can help
  - County crisis line
  - Mobile crisis team
  - Hospital Emergency Room
  - 800-273-TALK

For more information on suicide prevention visit the suicide prevention resource center at [www.sprc.org](http://www.sprc.org)

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<sup>1</sup> “Difficult Issues in Mentoring: Crises & Opportunities.” Dustianne North & Jerry Sherk. CARS. 09 Feb. 2012.