



Utah State
Board of
Education

School
Safety and
Student
Services

ROLES IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

A DOCUMENT FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN
EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIORAL CRISES

April 2025

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended for use by administrators, educators, para-educators, etc. in supporting students who are experiencing a behavioral/emotional crisis. It was extracted from the Utah State Board of Education's (USBE) technical assistance manual, [*Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions: A School-Based Behavior Guide for Educators, Administrators, and Families*](#) (LRBI), which can be found on the USBE website on the Behavior Support Program page.

This document is meant to outline the roles and associated responsibilities for school personnel who are responding to a student experiencing a behavioral/emotional crisis to support a coordinated response. Below are the typical roles that may be needed in a response.

ROLES IN BEHAVIORAL/EMOTIONAL CRISIS SITUATIONS

When a student experiences a behavioral/emotional crisis, there may be a need to have multiple staff involved in the response, especially as the crisis nears the crisis peak. Use this document to begin discussing the roles that may need to be filled during a behavioral/emotional crisis. Include in your discussion, the communication that will happen to ensure a coordinated response.

Leader

- Individual most experienced in handling crisis situations
- Coordinates immediate response, including directing others
- Ensure policies and procedures are followed
- Sets the example of calmness and presence of mind for others

Communicator

- Only person who interacts with the student experiencing the crisis
- Trained in de-escalation strategies
- Can change depending on the needs of the student and the situation

Observer

- Monitors the student for indicators of physical distress
- Monitors the adults interacting with students to determine if help or back up is needed
- Supports the leader in ensuring policies and procedures are being followed

Traffic Controller

- Manages the physical space in which the crisis is occurring

- Helps other students exit the area where the crisis is occurring
- Helps re-route students around a crisis situation safely or to an alternative path

Documenter

- Records all necessary details about the crisis situation (either during or after the situation)
- If an emergency safety intervention (ESI) is used, ensures required documentation is completed and submitted to the LEA's ESI Committee

Notifier

- Responsible for notifying the parent about the situation as required by LEA policy
- Responsible for notifying the school administrator about the situation as required by the LEA policy

Indirect Supporter

- Provides additional support to ensure safety, as directed by the leader
- Provides additional support (e.g., monitoring a building exit) to ensure safety, as directed by the student's behavior intervention plan (BIP)