

**From Crisis
to
Surviving
to
Thriving:
Our Journey
with Ben So
Far**



Jeff and Christine
Hittenberger
jhittenberger@gmail.com



**Essential
Questions**

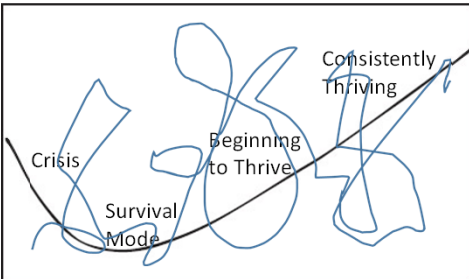
1. What are some common stages of the journey we are on with our children with special needs?
2. What principles and strategies can help us move from crisis to survival mode to beginning to thrive to consistently thriving?

***Breakout/Introductions:
Share your name and a bit
about your child. What
has the parenting journey
been like for you during
COVID?***

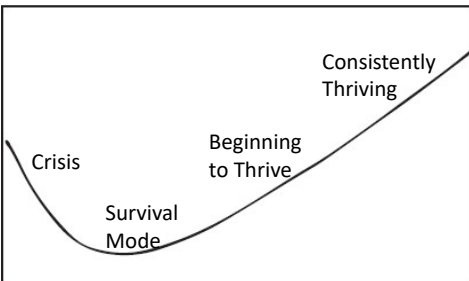
How the parenting journey often feels:



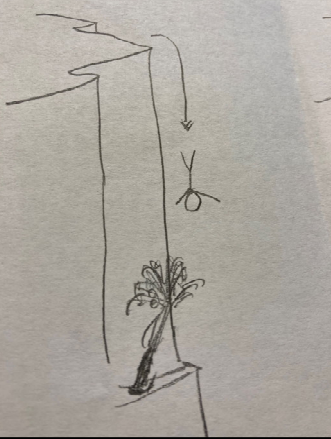
The Underlying Learning Curve



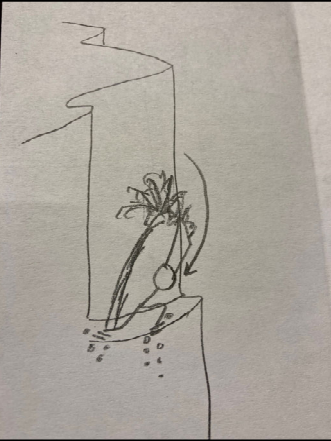
The Underlying Learning Curve



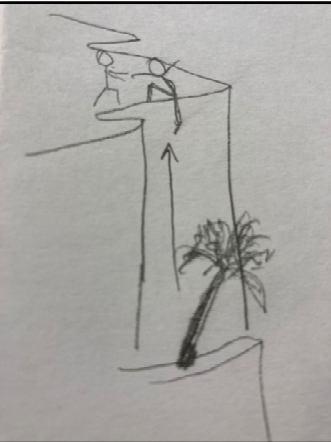
Crisis



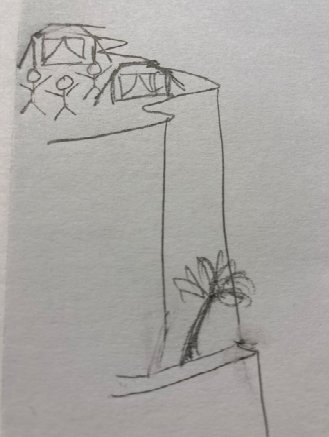
Survival Mode



Beginning to Thrive



Consistently Thriving



Experiencing Crisis

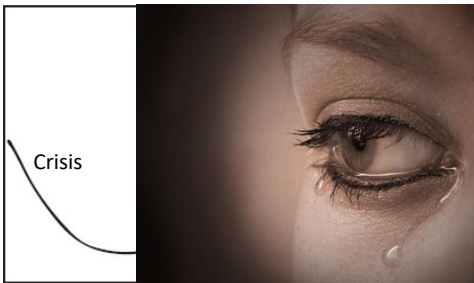


Photo source: campediemotivation.com

Characteristics of Crisis

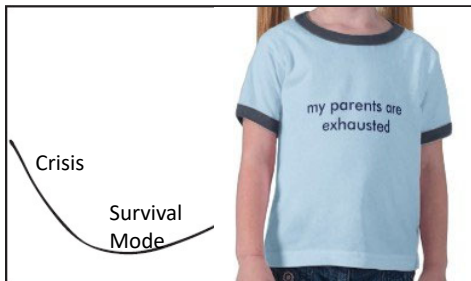
- o We're in free fall.
- o Immobilized by pain
- o Shattered hopes
- o Death of our old life
- o Feelings of utter inadequacy: "I can't do this."
- o Lack of support systems
- o Lack of self-care
- o In need of foundational principles and strategies

When In Crisis...

Embrace Foundational Principles:

- o Our child is a gift.
- o This is our life.
- o We GET to do this.
- o We say yes to what's healthy for our family and child, and no to what is unhealthy (the principle of Boundaries).
- o Self-care is essential: spirituality, humor, sanity, health.

Survival Mode



Characteristics of Survival Mode

- o Beginning to practice self-care
- o Working through stages of grief
- o Seeking support (e.g., early intervention, counseling, child care)
- o Starting to establish some routines
- o Grappling with the new normal
- o Beginning to make healthy choices
- o Recognizing need for a growth mindset

When in Survival Mode...

Cultivate a Growth Mindset:

- o We believe growth is possible for all of us.
- o We embrace challenges and don't give up easily.
- o We work on growth strategies as a way to move forward.
- o We prioritize self-care: spirituality, humor, sanity, health

Discussion:

Of these principles and strategies (value affirmations, self-care, boundaries, growth mindset) which have been most important to help you move through crisis and start moving beyond survival mode?

Beginning to Thrive



Beginning to Thrive

Photo source: edutopia.org

Characteristics of Beginning to Thrive

- o Attending to self-care
- o Solidifying growth mindset
- o Building win-win strategies
- o Continuing to establish boundaries
- o Beginning to create support teams
- o Cultivating agreement in core relationships (marriage, support teams, etc.)
- o Acting on the question: What works for us?

To Begin to Thrive...

Build Win-Win Strategies

- o We separate the person from the problem.
- o We focus on our interests and don't stake out positions.
- o We seek win-win solutions.
- o We use external criteria (Getting to Yes, Ury)
- o We consistently practice Boundaries.
- o We don't make significant decisions without Agreement.

Consistently Thriving



Consistently Thriving

Photo source: chronicle.augusta.com

Characteristics of Consistently Thriving

- o Consistently practicing self-care
- o Consistently creating support teams
- o Consistent support systems in place
- o Continuous growth for us, our child, and our relationships
- o Assessing and responding to changes, challenges, and crises and moving forward

To Thrive Consistently...

Create Support Teams

- o We recognize that we can't do this alone.
- o We recognize that there are people who want to partner with us.
- o We collaborate with those who are willing to be part of a team to support our child.
- o We work toward healthy outcomes for our child and others.

Discussion:

Where are you on the learning curve at this point? What strategy or principle might help you move to the next stage on the learning curve?

