

Mental Health Crisis

FAMILY CRISIS EDUCATION SERVICES



What is a mental health crisis?

A mental health crisis can be defined as the state of severe emotional or psychological distress that makes it difficult for an individual to cope with daily life. Symptoms include:

1. Intense feelings of hopelessness or despair
2. Suicidal thoughts or behaviors
3. Self-harm or other destructive behaviors
4. Extreme mood swings
5. Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
6. Sudden changes in behavior, such as increased aggression or irritability

Benefits of seeking help for a mental health crisis

A child's mental health crisis can be a stressful and overwhelming experience for parents and caregivers. Seeking professional help can provide support, guidance, and resource for managing the crisis and helping your child recover.

What immediate services are available to my child in these cases?

When a child is experiencing an acute mental health crisis, it's essential to seek professional help immediately. Depending on the severity of the situation, there are several types of services available to support children in crisis. Examples include:

1. **Crisis hotlines:** Many communities have hotlines that are staffed by trained professionals who can provide support, guidance, and referral information to families in crisis.
2. **Mobile crisis teams:** In some areas, mobile crisis teams are available to come to a child's location and provide immediate assistance. These teams are composed of mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and counselors.
3. **Emergency departments:** If a child is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical attention, parent or caregiver should take the child to the emergency department at their local hospital.
4. **Outpatient therapy:** After a child has been stabilized from an acute mental health crisis, ongoing outpatient therapy can be beneficial in managing symptoms and preventing future crisis.

What emotional support can I offer?

- **Listen.** Simply giving someone space to talk, and listening to how they're feeling, can be really helpful in itself. If they're finding it difficult, let them know that you're there when they are ready.
- **Offer reassurance.** Seeking help can feel lonely, and sometimes scary. You can reassure someone by letting them know that they are not alone, and that you will be there to help.
- **Stay calm.** Even though it might be upsetting to hear that someone you care about is distressed, try to stay calm. This will help your friend or family member feel calmer too, and show them that they can talk to you openly without upsetting you.
- **Be patient.** You might want to know more details about their thoughts and feelings, or want them to get help immediately. But it's important to let them set the pace for seeking support themselves.
- **Try not to make assumptions.** Your perspective might be useful to your friend or family member, but try not to assume that you already know what may have caused their feelings, or what will help.
- **Keep social contact.** Part of the emotional support you offer could be to keep things as normal as possible. This could include involving your friend or family member in social events, or chatting about other parts of your lives.