

NAVIGATING

a mental health

CRISIS



WHAT TO DO in a mental health crisis

IF YOU ARE WORRIED that you or your loved one is in crisis or nearing a crisis, seek help. Make sure to assess the immediacy of the situation to help determine where to start or who to call.

- ◆ **Is the person in danger** of hurting themselves, others or property?
- ◆ **Do you have time** to start with a phone call for guidance and support from a mental health professional?
- ◆ **Do you need emergency assistance?**



If the situation is life-threatening or if serious property damage is occurring, don't hesitate to call 911 and ask for immediate assistance.

TECHNIQUES that May Help De-escalate a Crisis:

- ✓ Keep your voice calm
- ✓ Avoid overreacting
- ✓ Listen to the person
- ✓ Express support and concern
- ✓ Avoid continuous eye contact
- ✓ Ask how you can help
- ✓ Keep stimulation level low
- ✓ Move slowly
- ✓ Offer options instead of trying to take control
- ✓ Avoid touching the person unless you ask permission
- ✓ Be patient
- ✓ Gently announce actions before initiating them
- ✓ Give them space, don't make them feel trapped
- ✗ Don't make judgmental comments
- ✗ Don't argue or try to reason with the person

When Calling 911 for a Mental Health Emergency

Remember to:

- ✓ Remain calm
- ✓ Explain that your loved one is having a mental health crisis and is not a criminal
- ✓ Ask for a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officer, if available

They will ask:

- ✓ Your name
- ✓ The person's name, age, description
- ✓ The person's current location
- ✓ Whether the person has access to a weapon

Information you may need to communicate:

- ✓ Mental health history, diagnosis(es)
- ✓ Medications, current/discontinued
- ✓ Suicide attempts, current threats
- ✓ Prior violence, current threats
- ✓ Drug use
- ✓ Contributing factors (i.e. current stressors)
- ✓ What has helped in the past
- ✓ Any delusions, hallucinations, loss of touch with reality

If you don't feel safe at any time, leave the location immediately.

