

# 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:

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- ✓ 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.

