

Module 11: Dealing With Crises

REACT online Toolkit info sheet

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Getting Help in a Crisis

These are the key points of contact in a crisis:

- **Crisis team.** Many services now offer a crisis helpline. If you do not already have the number, check the NHS Trust website. They are generally available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Staff are experienced in managing mental health problems and should be the first point of contact
- **Accident and Emergency department of your local hospital.** If your relative is willing to go with you to the A&E department it will be possible to see a Psychiatrist. Be aware you may have to wait a long time
- **Emergency Services (police or ambulance).** Where there is serious risk to people or property, you should strongly consider contacting the emergency services. Reporting to the police can be very hard when it involves a relative or close friend.

The Mental Health Crisis Concordant (2014) is a national agreement between services about how they will make sure people get appropriate help in a mental health crisis—below are four key areas that should make it easier for you as a relative or friend to get the right support in a crisis.

- **Access to support before crisis point** – making sure people with mental health problems can get help 24 hours a day and that when they ask for help, they are taken seriously.
- **Urgent and emergency access to crisis care** – making sure that a mental health crisis is treated with the same urgency as a physical health emergency.
- **Quality of treatment and care when in crisis** – making sure that people are treated with dignity and respect, in a therapeutic environment.
- **Recovery and staying well** – preventing future crises by making sure people are referred to appropriate services.



Your Early Intervention team can make sure you
get access to the REACT online toolkit



www.reactnhs.uk

Department of Health Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed therein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the HTA, NIHR, NHS or the Department of Health.

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Crisis Plans

Unfortunately, crises tend to happen when help is hard to find, like during the night. It is a good idea to have a clear plan of what you would do at this time. The crib sheet below can help you develop a plan.

Important Things to Remember

Do

- Think about what you believe needs to happen and try to insist on this
- Be clear about what the potential risks are for your relative and others (family and general public)
- If you feel you cannot cope with the situation then state this very clearly
- Take the name and details of the person you are speaking to
- Write down the time and details of all conversations
- Insist on speaking to a more senior person or an on-call manager if you are not happy with the help that is offered

Don't

- Agree a course of action if you feel you remain at risk
- Overestimate your ability to cope without appropriate back up and support from services

Visit the REACT NHS website, (www.reactnhs.uk), to find out more about Dealing With Crises and a relatives group forum where you can share your experiences with other relatives

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