

The NAMI NJ Do and Don't Card for Law Enforcement Education

MENTAL ILLNESS CRISIS

DO

DON'T

1. REMEMBER: a person with a mental illness has the RIGHT to FAIR TREATMENT and police protection.

1. ARREST a person for mentally ill behavior not criminal in nature.

2. Continually ASSESS THE SITUATION for dangerousness.

2. JOIN into behavior related to the person's mental illness.

3. MAINTAIN ADEQUATE SPACE between you and the subject.

3. STARE at the subject.

4. BE CALM.

4. CONFUSE the subject. One person should interact with the subject. Follow through with directions or commands.

5. BE HELPFUL. Respond to basic needs.

5. TOUCH the subject unless necessary. For people with mental illnesses it may cause fear and lead to violence.

6. GIVE FIRM, CLEAR DIRECTIONS; one person should talk to the subject.

6. GIVE MULTIPLE CHOICES. This can increase the subject's confusion.

7. RESPOND TO FEELINGS, rather than content.

7. WHISPER, JOKE OR LAUGH.

8. Respond to DELUSIONS by talking about the person's feelings rather than what he or she is saying.

8. DECEIVE the subject. Dishonesty increases fear and suspicion; the subject will likely remember it in any subsequent contacts.

1989 Mental Health Screening Law:

30:4-27.7 A law enforcement officer... acting in good faith pursuant to this act who takes reasonable steps to assess, take custody of, detain or transport an individual for the purpose of mental health assessment or treatment is immune from civil and criminal liability.

24 hour CRISIS HOTLINE:

Psychiatric Emergency/Screening



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