

CRISIS PLANNING FOR FAMILIES

Jennifer Hughes, LCSW
Associate Director of Program Quality Assurance
NAMI New Jersey

INTRODUCTIONS

- Presenter and Moderator: Jennifer Hughes, LCSW- NAMI NJ
- Panelists:
 - Aaron Doherty- Patrolman, Woodbridge Police, Middlesex County CIT Task Force
 - Jamaal Ryan, LSW-UBHC-APS
 - Juliet Hyndman-NAMI Warren County

DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES OF WORKSHOP

- The "Crisis Planning for Families" workshop will provide family members and caregivers with tools to help their loved one through a mental health crisis. There will be a family member, CIT trained police officer, and a screener from Acute Psychiatric Services, who will speak about their experiences throughout the workshop.
- Workshop attendees will:
 - Be able to identify triggers and warning signs of a mental health crisis
 - Identify tools to help their loved one in a mental health crisis
 - Understand how to respond to law enforcement
 - Consider ways to prevent a crisis

WHAT IS A CRISIS?

A mental health crisis is any situation in which a person's behavior puts them at risk of hurting themselves or others and or prevents them from being able to care for themselves or function effectively in the community



WARNING SIGNS OF MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

- Inability to perform daily tasks like bathing, brushing teeth, brushing hair, changing clothes
- Rapid mood swings, increased energy level, inability to stay still, pacing; suddenly depressed, withdrawn; suddenly happy or calm after period of depression
- Increased agitation verbal threats, violent, out-of-control behavior, destroys property
- Abusive behavior to self and others, including substance use or self-harm (cutting)
- Isolation from school, work, family, friends
- Loses touch with reality (psychosis), unable to recognize family or friends, confused, strange ideas, thinks they're someone they're not, doesn't understand what people are saying, hears voices, sees things that aren't there
- Paranoia, suspicion and mistrust of people or their actions without evidence or justification

TRIGGERS



EXTERNAL TRIGGERS

- Changes to family structure
- Loss of any kind
- Substance/alcohol use/abuse
- Legal trouble
- Changes in relationships
- Conflicts with others
- Pressures at school or work
- Peer pressure
- Noise levels
- Exposure to trauma/violence

INTERNAL TRIGGERS

- Sleep patterns changed
- Medication changes
- Other health conditions
- Feelings of loneliness
- Perceived lack of understanding
- Fears or phobias
- Previous trauma
- Hunger
- Disruptive thought process

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR LOVED
ONE EXPERIENCES CRISIS

SUICIDAL IDEATION

- Giving away personal possessions
- Talking as if they're saying goodbye or going away forever
- Taking steps to tie up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debts
- Making or changing a will
- Stockpiling pills or obtaining a weapon
- Preoccupation with death
- Sudden cheerfulness or calm after a period of despondency
- Dramatic changes in personality, mood and/or behavior
- Increased drug or alcohol use
- Saying things like "Nothing matters anymore," "You'll be better off without me," or "Life isn't worth living"
- Withdrawal from friends, family and normal activities
- Failed romantic relationship
- Sense of utter hopelessness and helplessness
- History of suicide attempts or other self-harming behaviors
- History of family/friend suicide or attempts

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NAVIGATING
a mental health **CRISIS**

WHAT TO DO if you suspect someone is thinking about suicide

If you notice warning signs or if you're concerned someone is thinking about suicide, don't be afraid to talk to them about it.

START the Conversation by sharing specific signs you've noticed, like:

"I've noticed lately that you haven't been sleeping, aren't interested in soccer anymore, which you used to love, are posting a lot of sad song lyrics online, etc.]..."

Then say something like:

- ✓ "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- ✓ "Do you have a plan? Do you know how you would do it?"
- ✓ "When was the last time you thought about suicide?"

If the answer is "Yes" or if you think they might be at risk of suicide, you need to seek help immediately.

- Call a therapist or psychiatrist/physician or other healthcare professional who has been working with the person
- Remove potential means such as weapons and medications to reduce risk
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Line at 1-800-273-8255 or call 911

LISTEN, EXPRESS CONCERN, REASSURE.
Focus on being understanding, caring and nonjudgmental, saying something like:

"You are not alone. I'm here for you"

"I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."

"I'm concerned about you and I want you to know there is help available to get you through this."

"You are important to me; we will get through this together."

Please remember, a suicide threat or attempt is a medical emergency requiring professional help as soon as possible.

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NAMI Helpline: 800-950-NAMI (6264) Text "NAMI" to 74174to reach the Crisis Text Line

HOW TO RESPOND TO SUICIDE WARNINGS



- Ask questions
- Express concern
- Listen
- Reflect
- Let them know you are there for them
- Let them know there are treatments available

RESPONSE OPTIONS

Call the Mental Health Provider

Contact a mental health crisis response team if one is available (EISS)

Go to the emergency room

Contact a Respite House near you

Call 911 and ask for someone with mental health experience (CIT)

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONE IN THE SITUATION

- Keep your voice calm
- Avoid overreacting
- Listen to the person
- Express support and concern
- Avoid continuous eye contact
- Ask how you can help
- 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

Safety can't be assured

The person is a danger of hurting themselves, others or major property destruction

Immediate life-threatening situation

CALL 911

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU CALL 911

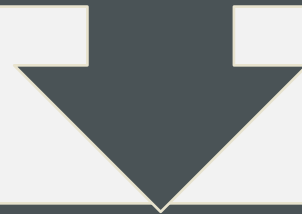
Ask for someone with mental health experience, like a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) and tell them:

- This is a mental health emergency
 - If threats have been made
 - If there are weapons involved
 - History of violence
 - Current diagnosis
 - Current medications



HOW WILL LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPOND?

Take Charge and Assess the Situation



Decision Maker

May decide a crime has been committed

May decide hospitalization is needed and place a hold to transport

May decide that the person does not need hospitalization and will recommend additional resources such as a Respite House

EMERGENCY ROOM

Doesn't guarantee admission to hospital

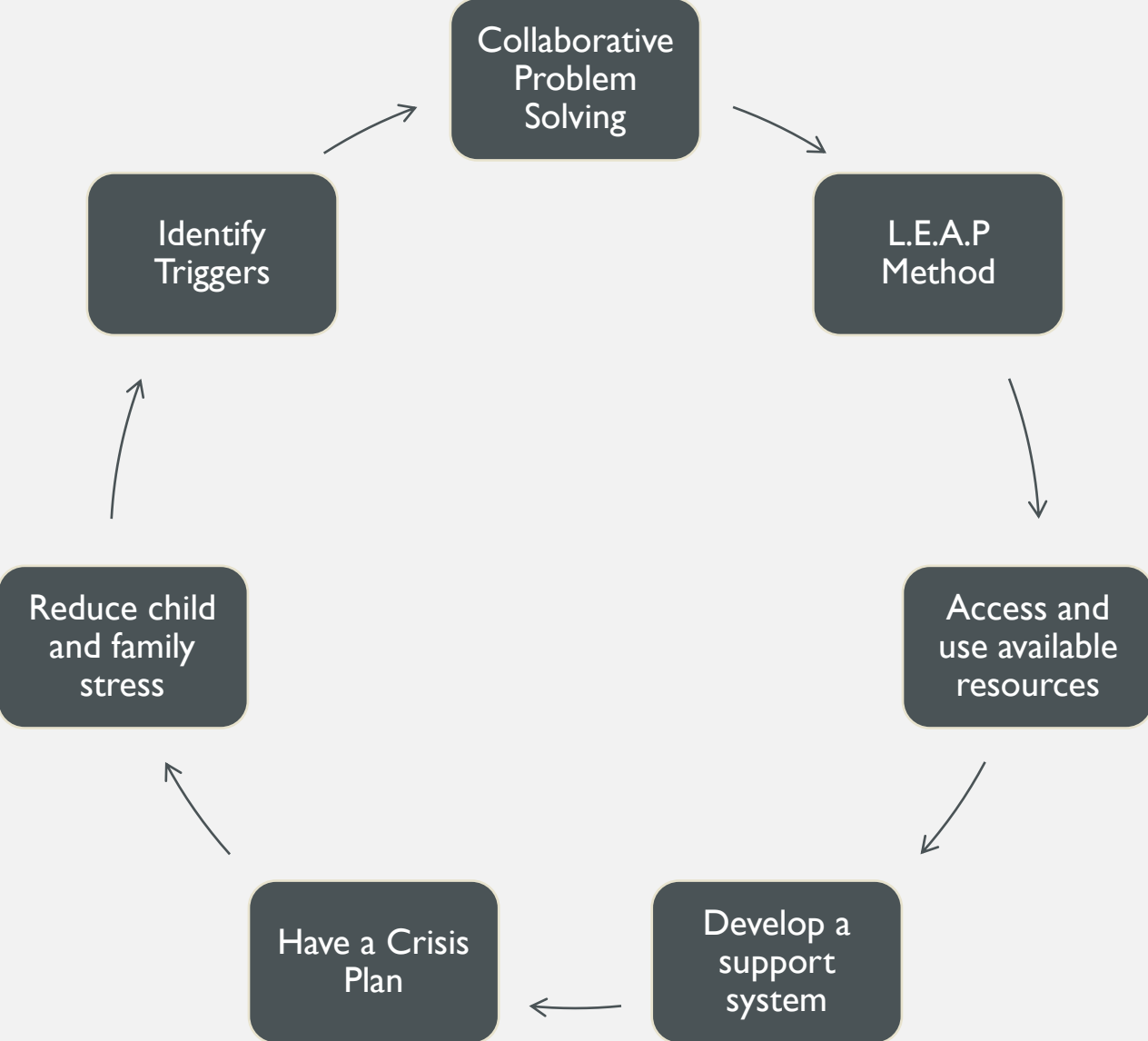
Bring medical information, including doses of all current medications

County Crisis teams can assist with triage, if there are mental health crisis teams in your community

Admission is determined by doctor

Be prepared to wait

PREVENTING A CRISIS



IMPORTANT HOTLINES & PHONE NUMBERS

- Call 911
 - if the crisis is a life-threatening emergency. Make sure to notify the operator that it is a psychiatric emergency and ask for an officer trained in crisis intervention or trained to assist people experiencing a psychiatric emergency.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline –
 - Call 800-273-TALK (8255) to speak with a trained crisis counselor.
- Crisis Text Line –
 - Text NAMI to 741-741 to connect with a trained crisis counselor to receive crisis support via text message.
- Trevor Hotline- Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention for LGBTQ young people under 25
 - 1-866-488-7386 to speak with a trained crisis counselor
- 2nd Floor Hotline- Youth Helpline of NJ (ages 10-24)
 - 1-888-222-2228
- National Domestic Violence Hotline –
 - Call 800-799-SAFE (7233) to speak with trained experts who provide confidential support to anyone experiencing domestic violence or seeking resources and information.
- National Sexual Assault Hotline –
 - Call 800-656-HOPE (4673) to connect with a trained staff member from a sexual assault service provider in your area that offers access to a range of free services.
- DCP (Department of Child Protection and Permanency)- 1-877-652-2873
 - To report child abuse or neglect
- Wellness Centers & Respite Houses -See handout

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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.

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

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

They will ask:

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

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

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

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NAMI HelpLine: 800-950-NAMI (6264) Text "NAMI" to 747474 to reach the Crisis Text Line



NAMI SMARTS for ADVOCACY



REFERENCES

- Navigating a Mental Health Crisis Resource Guide
 - [nami.org](https://www.nami.org)
- Preparing for a Crisis: Mental Health Crisis Planning for Families Webinar
 - SAMHSA and Department of Health and Human Services