CRISIS PLANNING FOR FAMILIES

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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- Rapid mood swings, increased energy level, inability to stay still, pacing; suddenly depressed, withdrawn; suddenly happy or calm after period of depression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
- People
- Places
- Things

Internal
- Feelings
- Mood
- Physical Illness
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

www.nami.org
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
- Go to the emergency room
- Contact a mental health crisis response team if one is available (EISS)
- 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

Collaborative Problem Solving

Identify Triggers

Reduce child and family stress

Have a Crisis Plan

Develop a support system

Access and use available resources
INFO

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.

• DCPP (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
REFERENCES

• Navigating a Mental Health Crisis Resource Guide
  • nami.org
• Preparing for a Crisis: Mental Health Crisis Planning for Families Webinar
  • SAMHSA and Department of Health and Human Services