

Immediate Help In An Emergency

- **If your loved one or another person is in immediate, life-threatening physical danger, call 911.** Be specific that you are calling about a psychiatric crisis. Be clear that you are seeking involuntary psychiatric hospitalization, NOT arrest. “Example: “I am calling about a mental health emergency. My brother has schizophrenia; he is not taking his meds and he is hearing voices.”
- Specifically describe the behavior you are seeing that most closely matches the laws in your state for emergency psychiatric hospitalization.
 - Example: DON'T say – “My sister is a danger to herself.”
 - DO say – “My sister is hearing voices, and she is lying down in the middle of a busy street.”
- Explain why you need assistance. Example: "I'm afraid she will hurt me" or "I can't get her to go to the hospital."
- Meet emergency responders outside the home. Brief them on the situation before they interact with your loved one. Once the police have arrived you will have little control over the situation or what happens.

- **If a person is not in immediate, life threatening physical danger or at risk of causing the same to another, call or text the [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](https://www.988lifeline.org) at 988** (chat function is available [here at 988Lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org)) to speak to a trained mental health crisis worker 24/7. If a local mental health crisis team is available in your community, a mobile crisis team may be able to do an onsite evaluation and provide information about local crisis services.
 - To reach the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for veterans, select "1"
 - To reach Nacional de Prevención del Suicidio (Spanish) select "2"
 - Lifeline Options for Deaf + Hard of Hearing for TTY Users: use your preferred relay service or dial 711 then 988. You may also text 988, or chat function is available [here at 988Lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).

NAMI: Tips for How to Help a Person with Mental Illness

Because millions of people in the U.S. live with a mental health condition, you likely encounter people with a mental illness in your family or in your daily life. However, if you are unsure of how best to approach someone who may be struggling, these tips may help.

Suggestions on how you may approach someone living with a mental health condition:

- Talk to them in a space that is comfortable, where you won't likely be interrupted and where there are likely minimal distractions.
- Ease into the conversation, gradually. It may be that the person is not in a place to talk, and that is OK. Greeting them and extending a gentle kindness can go a long way. Sometimes less is more.
- Be sure to speak in a relaxed and calm manner.

Mt. Carmel Mental Health Ministry – What to Do in an Emergency and Helping Those in Crisis

- Communicate in a straightforward manner and stick to one topic at a time.
- Be respectful, compassionate and empathetic to their feelings by engaging in reflective listening, such as “I hear that you are having a bad day today. Yes, some days are certainly more challenging than others. I understand.”
- Instead of directing the conversation at them with ‘you’ statements, use ‘I’ statements instead.
- Be a good listener, be responsive and make eye contact with a caring approach.
- Ask them appropriate questions and avoid prying.
- Give them the opportunity to talk and open up but don’t press.
- Share some easy insights as a way of encouraging easy conversation, such as comments about the weather, the community or other.
- Reduce any defensiveness by sharing your feelings and looking for common ground.
- Speak at a level appropriate to their age and development level. Keep in mind that mental illness has nothing to do with a person’s intelligence.
- Be aware of a person becoming upset or confused by your conversation with them.
- Show respect and understanding for how they describe and interpret their symptoms.
- Genuinely express your concern.
- Offer your support and connect them to help if you feel that they need it. Ask, “How can I help?” if appropriate, or even, “Can I pray with you now?” if appropriate.
- Give the person hope for recovery, offer encouragement and prayers.

Things to Avoid Saying:

- “Just pray about it.”
- “You just need to change you’re attitude.”
- “Stop harping on the negative, you should just start living.”
- “Everyone feels that way sometimes.”
- “You have the same illness as my (whoever).”
- “Yes, we all feel a little crazy now and then.”

Things to Avoid Doing:

- Criticizing blaming or raising your voice at them.
- Talking too much, too rapidly, too loudly. Silence and pauses are ok.
- Showing any form of hostility towards them.
- Assuming things about them or their situation.
- Being sarcastic or making jokes about their condition.
- Patronizing them or saying anything condescending.

NAMI Support Groups: <https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/Support-Groups>