

PLAN

Create a crisis plan

Children can experience a mental health crisis even when their families have utilized the best resources offered by mental health professionals, the local school system, advocacy agencies and social service organizations. A crisis plan is a written plan designed to address behaviours and help prepare for a crisis. Preparing for a crisis is an individualized process. However, there are some common elements that can be found in a good crisis prevention plan.

Child's information – name and age of child, mental health diagnosis, medical history, list of child's strengths and interests.

Family information – name of parents, step-parents, list of family members who live in the home and family members with close ties.

Behaviours – things that trigger or antecedents (things that are present before the behaviour occurs), a list of strategies and treatments that have worked in the past, a list of what may escalate the child's behaviour (such as actions or people that are likely to make the situation worse), a list of what helps calm the child or reduces symptoms.

Medication – name and type of medication, dosage, prescriber's name and phone number, pharmacy name and phone number, list of medications that have not worked in the past and known allergies.

Treatment choices – list of interventions or treatments that are being used, list of interventions that have not worked in the past, treatments that should be avoided, list of treatment preferences.

Professional involvement - phone numbers of children's crisis team, family doctor, therapist, social worker, psychiatrist, and hospitals with psychiatric units.

Supports – adults the child has a trusting relationship with such as neighbours, friends, family members, favourite teacher or counsellor at school, people at church or work acquaintances.

Safety concerns – limiting access to guns, knives or weapons, medication; (both prescription and over-the-counter); safety plan for siblings or other family members; emergency room contact names and phone numbers.

Resources – advocacy organizations, support groups. Developing a crisis plan involves active involvement of all team members, including involvement of the child when possible. A crisis plan should be written and distributed to all persons who may be involved in resolving a crisis. It should be updated whenever there is a change in the child's diagnosis, medication, treatment or team members.

Remember:

- Talk with ALL family members and discuss what to do, if this were to happen. This is IMPORTANT. There is no reason to be embarrassed. The more you talk about it, the more comfortable your family members will feel and the more education they will get.
- Contact your local police department; provide them with a copy of the crisis plan.
- Create a safe environment by removing all weapons and sharp objects.
- Lock up all medications, both over-the-counter and prescription medications.
- Create a plan that keeps other family members safe, especially younger children in the home.
- Know the number of your county mental health crisis team.

Create a crisis kit

Parents whose children experience frequent crises may benefit from developing a crisis kit that includes their crisis plan, information binder and a small tote bag or backpack with snacks, games, music or books that may help the child when waiting for long periods of time. This crisis kit should be kept in an easily accessible place in your home or in your car. You may want to consider packing an emergency bag that includes a change of clothes and basic hygiene supplies that can be kept close to your front door or kept in your vehicle in case a crisis occurs.

Reflect

Following a crisis, it is important to reflect back on what has happened to learn what you can do to potentially prevent or minimize future crises. Some important questions to ask include:

- What situations or triggers led to the crisis?
- What worked to reduce tension or avoid a conflict?
- What steps did we or could we have taken to keep everyone safe and calm?

Write down the results of this reflection and include it in future crisis plans. The more you understand the underlying causes and triggers of a crisis and what strategies helped, the more prepared you will be in case of future crises. Including your child in this process may help them recognize their internal warning signs for crisis. If possible, ask your child for a list of things that you can do to help them in a crisis.

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness Minnesota. Mental Health Crisis Planning for Children. Learn to Recognize, Manage, Prevent and Plan for Your Child's Mental Health Crisis. Oct 2010. Retrieved from: <http://www.namihelps.org>

CHILD Short-Term Crisis Intervention Plan

Child and Family Information:

Child's Name:	Birth Date	Diagnosis(s)	Date of Plan:
Medications:	Dosage:	Prescriber's Name / Number:	Pharmacy Name / Number:
Mother's Name:	Phone(s):	Father's Name:	Phone(s):

Description of child/family strengths:

Description of immediate child/family needs:

Safety concerns:

Treatment choices:

- Interventions preferred:
- Interventions that have been used:
- Interventions that should be avoided:

Professional involvement:

Psychiatrist Name/ Phone:	Therapist Name/Phone:	School Contact Phone:	Case Mgr Name/Phone:
Crisis Team Phone:	Family Doctor Name/ Phone:	Hospital Name/ Phone:	Other:

Supports to use in crisis resolution:

Name/Phone:	Name/Phone:	Name/Phone:	Name/Phone:
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Resources:

Advocacy Group:	Support Group:	MH Agency:	Other:
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