



## Mental Health Intervention

***First thing first! Before checking in with others, do a self-check.***

***If a crisis or high tense situation is taking place, take a moment to acknowledge how you are feeling.***

### Identifying a Crisis:

- **Stressors that can cause a mental health crisis:**

- Home or environmental stressors (changes in relationships, loss of any kind, trauma or exposure to violence, conflicts or arguments with a loved one or friends)
- Feeling alone or not having a healthy support system
- Switching or stopping mental health treatments; missing medication doses
- Discrimination
- School or work stressors
- Being in crowds
- Natural disaster, violence, or terrorism
- Substance use
- Medical diagnosis

- **Warning signs of a crisis:**

- Inability to complete daily tasks (i.e. brushing teeth, bathing, dressing)
- Increased agitation, verbal threats
- Paranoia
- Abusive behavior
- Psychosis (loss of touch of reality)
- Isolation from school, work, family, friends
- Rapid mood swings

### When mental health crisis happens:

- **Create a safe and trusting space**

- **Keep yourself calm**

- **Stress reduction strategies/De-escalation**

- Identify survivor needs – reframe the issue to a win-win situation, offer options (i.e. What are your needs?)
- Give them space, don't make them feel trapped; don't block the doorway or any other exit
- Allow time for emotions to dissipate
- Empathy – you do not need to understand everything, but looking at a situation from the individual's perspective can support your ability to empathize with them.
- Prevent interruptions
- Listen to the individual
- Keep stimulation level low
- Gently announce actions before initiating them
- Keep your communication consistent
- Identify if there is a "safety risk"

## Dos and Don'ts:

- ✓ Do use empathy
- ✓ Do keep yourself calm
- ✓ Do validate how the individual is feeling
- ✓ Do provide a glimmer of hope – discuss possible solutions for the identified need
- ✓ Do say things like, "I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help."
- ✗ Don't raise your voice
- ✗ Don't make judgmental comments
- ✗ Don't rush them to speak or "figure it out"
- ✗ Don't blame the individual for their situation
- ✗ Don't tell the individual in crisis to get over it
- ✗ Don't focus exclusively on the negative
- ✗ Don't promise that no one else will know
- ✗ Don't say, "We all go through tough times like these. You'll be fine."

## Identifying suicidal thinking and lethality assessment:

- **Warning signs of suicide: (such as language and behaviors to pay attention to)**
  - Verbalizing hopelessness or helplessness
  - History of suicide attempts
  - Giving away personal possessions
  - Making amends
  - Organizing personal documents, paying off debts, creating/changing a will
  - Preoccupation with death
  - Obtaining a weapon or stockpiling pills
- **Steps for suicide lethality assessment**
  - Ask if the individual has access to lethal weapons or tools
  - Is there an active plan of suicide?
  - When was the last time the individual thought about suicide?
- **Talk to your supervisors about policies and procedures for calling 911.**

## Self Care:

- Try to prioritize good sleep
- Physical fitness – exercise, walk, jog, play games promoting movement
- Take a vacation
- Connect with your healthy support network
- Meditate
- Drink water, choose healthy foods
- Don't bring work home with you
- Take breaks throughout the day
- Set boundaries to create work/life balance
- Be kind to yourself
- Listen to music
- Engage in some favorite hobbies or activities
- Gardening
- Coloring
- Volunteer

## Resources:

- 988 Suicide Hotline
- Local suicide hotline numbers:  

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- Any additional resources that might be helpful for advocates to have on hand:  

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**ODNV Resource Center**

<https://www.odvn.org/resources/>



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**Get in touch. Get involved.**  
[www.odvn.org](http://www.odvn.org)

