Managing your Child’s Mental Health Crisis

Store It Safe
A program of the Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

Keep this information with you at all times – such as a picture in your phone – to help manage mental health crisis moments with teens.

3 STEPS FOR TIMES OF CRISIS

1. Recognize when your child is having a mental health crisis (displaying changes in mood/behavior that leaves you fearing for their safety)

2. Provide a Safe Environment at All Times
   • No access to lethal means
   • During the crisis, remove all lethal means from the home

3. Follow the Safety Plan
   • Enact the safety and communication plan
   • Give youth a safe chance to use coping mechanisms
   • Try the 5 Senses Grounding Technique. Find (or think of) and say out loud:
     - 5 things you can SEE
     - 4 things you can FEEL
     - 3 things you can HEAR
     - 2 things you can SMELL
     - 1 thing you can TASTE
   • Finish with a deep breath and exhale

4. Call for Help
   • If crisis continues, get help from professionals
   • If you fear for immediate safety, CALL 911
   • Call a counselor or healthcare provider
   • Text 4HOPE to 741741 for support
   • Call or text the confidential Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988

CHECK OUT OUR FAMILY DISCUSSION GUIDE
GET PREPARED FOR A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

1. Restrict Access – Store It Safe

Whether your child has mental health concerns or not, youth should not have unsupervised access to any lethal means, including: firearms, alcohol, and prescription and over the counter medication. Keep these items locked away and ensure youth DO NOT know the location of the keys.

2. Make a Safety Plan with Your Child When Things are Calm

• Name 3 people your child feels comfortable reaching out to in a crisis – for example: a teacher, friend, or family member
• Ask your child how they feel supported – be creative and plan for different situations
• Have agreed upon coping strategies available – scan QR code below for links to ideas
• Practice healthy skills to train the brain before times of crisis

3. Understand Crisis Will Happen

• Remember – the first hour of a crisis is the most overwhelming
• The safety plan helps the child get through the initial crisis safely
• Once the situation has been de-escalated, appropriate care can be sought

Scan this QR code to find more resources on our website
www ohioaap org/storeitsafe

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