

Parent Talk

JULY 2024

Managing A Crisis Situation

Children with mental health conditions can commonly experience a crisis when their symptoms become too much for them to bear. It can be a scary experience for a caregiver to find their child in a crisis and not know what to do to support them. Below are some tips families can use to help prevent a potential mental health crisis, as well as what to do when a crisis occurs.

Make A Plan

The first step to handling a crisis is to prepare before it even happens. Make sure you have a ready list of action steps to take if you one day find your family in crisis. One of these things would be knowing who you'd call such as clinician, pediatrician, or school guidance counselor. You should also be able to make a list of ways you know you can effectively help your child calm down. What are some of the strategies you've learned when meeting with a clinician? What things have worked and what haven't? What are some things that you know for sure will trigger your child's symptoms and how can you make an exit plan if you're exposed to those things? You should also work on a premade script outlining your child's condition, symptoms, potential triggers, and more in case you need to relay that information to an emergency responder.



Collect Resources

The next part of handling a crisis is to utilize a list of resources. These can be the names and numbers of the individuals you wrote down in your plan from step one (a clinician, pediatrician, or school counselor) or they can be friends and family members who are part of your child's support system. You may also consider using some form of emergency services such as a mental health crisis support line. If your child or family is currently at risk of immediate danger, you should be prepared to call 911 using the script you wrote in step one.



Provide Support

At the end of the day, the greatest resource available to your child is you. Even if you're not a clinician, you still have the tools available to at least help them until they can receive professional care during a crisis. Many crisis situations can be de-escalated simply by knowing what works for your child. Make sure to keep a calm tone of voice, speak clearly, and avoid matching any high emotions your child may be experiencing. Remember everything you've learned through therapy or at school and try your best to keep things even until you can contact additional support.



Need more help?

Resources at The Baker Center are just a click away

Therapy & Treatment Services

CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE THERAPY →

Special Education

MANVILLE SCHOOL →

Therapeutic Summer Camp

CAMP BAKER →

College Preparation

NEXT STEP →

Featured Resources



A Parent & Caregiver Guide to Helping Your Family Before, During, and After a Crisis

Caring for a child in crisis can be frightening, confusing, and sometimes more than a caregiver/family can handle alone. Asking for help doesn't mean you've done anything wrong, and being prepared doesn't mean there will be a crisis.

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Una Guía Para Padres y Cuidadores Para Ayudar A Tu Familia Antes, Durante y Después de una Crisis

Cuidar a un niño en crisis puede ser aterrador, confuso, y a veces más que un cuidador/la familia puede manejar a solas. Pedir ayuda no significa que hayas hecho algo malo, y estar preparado no quiere decir que habrá una crisis.

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