

Behavioral Health and Crisis Info

Behavioral Health Disorders: Affect a person’s thinking, emotional state, and behavior and disrupts the person’s ability to work, carry out daily activities, and engage in satisfying relationships

The impact of these disorders refers to the **amount of disruption** they cause. Behavioral health disorders can be more disabling than many chronic physical illnesses. For example:

- The disability from moderate depression is similar to the impact from relapsing multiple sclerosis, severe asthma, or chronic hepatitis B.
- The disability from severe depression is comparable to the disability from quadriplegia.

Depression Signs and Symptoms	Anxiety Signs and Symptoms	Symptoms of Schizophrenia	Symptoms of Bipolar Disorder
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue, lack of energy, sleeping too much or too little • Overeating or loss of appetite, weight loss or gain • Headaches, unexplained aches and pains • Mood swings, crying spells, sadness, guilt, anxiety, anger, irritability • Withdrawal from others, neglect of responsibilities • Slow movement • Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, pessimism • Impaired memory and concentration, confusion and indecisiveness • Tendency to believe others see one in a negative light, frequent self-criticism • Thoughts of death and suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pounding heart, chest pain, rapid heartbeat, blushing • Fast breathing, shortness of breath • Dizziness, headache, sweating, tingling, numbness • Stomach pains, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea • Avoidance of situations, obsessive or compulsive behavior, distress in social situations, phobic behavior • Unrealistic or excessive fear and worry, mind racing or going blank, decreased memory and concentration, anger, indecisiveness, irritability, impatience, confusion, restlessness or feeling “on edge” or nervous, fatigue, sleep disturbance, vivid dreams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delusions – false beliefs • Hallucinations – incorrect perceptions of objects or events involving the senses • Disorganized thought • Disorganized speech • Disorganized behavior • Loss of drive • Blunted emotions • Social withdrawal • Loss of touch with reality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling unusually “high” and optimistic or extremely irritable • Unrealistic, grandiose beliefs about one’s abilities, increase in goal directed behavior • Increased energy and overactivity • Decreased need for sleep and still feeling energetic • Racing thinking and rapid speech • Distractibility • Excessive pleasurable activities • Impaired judgement, impulsiveness and lack of insight

Definition of a Crisis

Crisis by definition is short-term and overwhelming and involves a disruption of an individual's normal and stable state where the usual methods of coping and problem solving do not work

Crisis Communication Skills

Crisis intervention generally focuses on what is happening right here, right now, and is a time limited interaction. It is important to view the individual’s behavior as an understandable reaction to stress. **A key strategy is to slow the interaction down.**

- Introduce yourself and get the person’s name (if you don’t already know it) and use it in the conversation.
- Use active listening skills: lean in, open body posture, nod head, and minimal encourages (yes, uh-huh)
- Use reflective statements; “What I hear you saying is...”. You can also say “I see how you could feel that way”. Be careful not to buy into delusions, but it can be beneficial to state that you believe they are seeing or hearing something.

- Be aware that just because the person may be showing a limited range of emotions, it does not mean that they are not feeling anything
- Share resources, phone numbers, or contacts that might be able to assist this person. The following resources may be beneficial to you in your interactions with individuals:

King County Behavioral Health & Recovery Division Client Services Line (800) 790-8049 or (206) 263-8997 <i>Provides linkage to Behavioral Health Treatment and Peer Support</i>	National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800) 273-8255 <i>24/7 support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources</i>
King County 24/7 Crisis Line (206) 461-3222 or (866) 427-4747 <i>Provides immediate help to individuals, families and friends of people in crisis</i>	

SHOW EMPATHY: Empathy helps the person to feel understood, to feel a sense of safety and self-control, and to begin to trust you.

BE GENUINE: Interact with the other person without any pretensions. Share your own feelings about what is happening.

SHOW ACCEPTANCE: Each person has a right to their own thoughts, feelings, or behaviors and deserves respect.

USE “I” STATEMENTS: Communicate to the person that you are aware of their wants, thoughts, desires, and/or feelings.

FACILITATE LISTENING: Exclude all other distractions and concentrate on the goal of stabilizing the crisis situation. Ask questions.

How to Help

What to do.....	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remain calm • Talk in short, simple sentences • Speak slowly and quietly in a nonthreatening tone • Answer questions calmly • Be patient and allow plenty of time for responses, repeat things if needed • Comply with reasonable requests • Maintain your safety and access to an exit • Understand the symptoms for what they are • Empathize with how the person is feeling about his or her beliefs and experiences • Use positive words instead of negative words • Stay calm and avoid nervous behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathize with how the person is feeling about his or her beliefs and experiences • Show empathy and genuineness • Build hope – resolution is possible • Focus on strengths • Present self as a calming influence • Demonstrate confidence and compassion • Be consistent • Use “I” statements • Use positive words instead of negative words • Stay calm and avoid nervous behavior • Take breaks, if needed, during the conversation
What NOT to do	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confront the person • Criticize or blame • Take delusional comments personally • Use sarcasm • Use patronizing statements • Argue or challenge the person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State any judgments about the content of the beliefs and experiences • Assume the person cannot understand you, even if the response is limited • Threaten • Raise your voice or talk too fast