

Organization Name

Organization Phone Number
Organization Street, City, State Zip
organization website

Communicating with Someone in Crisis Who Has a Psychiatric Illness

- DO SLOW DOWN**
- DO GIVE THEM SPACE**
Don't make them feel trapped
- DO BE CALM.** Express support and concern.
- DO SPEAK SLOWLY AND SOFTLY.**
- DO USE SHORT, SIMPLE SENTENCES.**
- DO AVOID** sudden or quick movements.
- DO BE HELPFUL.** Respond to basic needs.
Be low key. "We are all here to help."
- DO GIVE FIRM, CLEAR DIRECTIONS;**
One person should talk to the subject.
- DO RESPOND TO DELUSIONS or HALLUCINATIONS** by talking about the person's feelings rather than what he or she is saying.
- DO LISTEN** to their story.
- DO EXPLAIN POLICY,** especially if handcuffed.

Don't Don't Don't Don't Don't

- TAKE CONTROL** if you don't have to.
- ARGUE** or reason with psychotic thinking.
- STARE** at the subject.
- CONFUSE THE SUBJECT.**
One person should interact with the subject.
Others should keep their distance.
Ask casual observers to leave.
Follow through with directions or commands.
- TOUCH** the subject unless necessary.
For people with mental illnesses it may cause fear and lead to violence.
- SHOUT.**
- GIVE THEM MULTIPLE CHOICES.**
This can increase the subjects confusion.
- WHISPER, JOKE OR LAUGH.**
- DECEIVE** the subject. Dishonesty increases fear and suspicion: the subject will likely remember it in any subsequent contact.
- DON'T ARREST A PERSON FOR MENTALLY ILL BEHAVIOR NOT CRIMINAL IN NATURE.**
- JOIN** into behavior related to the person's mental illness
- If a person has to be restrained, DON'T HOGTIE.**
Immediately raise him/her from prone into sitting position, monitor vital signs, and call for medical aid.

Crisis Card #1 – Do's and Don'ts Communicating with Someone in Crisis

Also available in Spanish

Cards can be personalized with your organization's name and contact information

Shipping costs are included in the price of the cards.

The card sale site is at [Storefront \(asbaces.com\)](http://Storefront (asbaces.com))

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Is Someone at Risk for Suicide?

→ **R**ecognize the signs of emotional suffering

→ **E**xpress concern, offer support and listen nonjudgmentally

→ **A**sk the question directly, in a private setting and stay calm:

- Are you having thoughts of suicide?
- Are you thinking of killing yourself?

If the answer is yes, ask:

- Have you decided how you are going to kill yourself?
- Have you decided when you would do it?
- Have you collected the things you need to carry out your plan?

→ **C**are enough to keep the person safe.

- Do not leave them alone
- Do not use guilt or threats to stop suicide, such as:
"You will go to hell" or "You will ruin other people's lives if you die by suicide!"
- Calmly listen. Don't agree to keep it a secret.

→ **T**ext or call a number for extra support—get help now

Text: 741741 Call: 1-800-273-8255 - Lifeline
Call 911 for transport to professional help
As of 7-1-22, the National Lifeline will change to 988.



Suicide Warning Signs

- ✓ Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- ✓ Writing notes or poems about death
- ✓ Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or buying a gun
- ✓ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- ✓ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- ✓ Talking about being a burden to others
- ✓ Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- ✓ Deterioration in performance and daily life roles
- ✓ Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- ✓ Sleeping too little or too much
- ✓ Withdrawing or feeling isolated, change in relationships
- ✓ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- ✓ Displaying extreme mood swings or sudden change in personality
- ✓ Overt signs of depression (neglect of appearance, self-mutilation, crying, giving away items, visiting or calling people to say good-bye, etc.)

Risk is greater if a behavior is new or has increased and if it seems related to a painful event, loss or change.

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COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION CARD

**You Are Not Alone
The Illness is Not Your Fault
Never Give Up Hope**

Organization Executive Director
Organization Phone Number
Organization Email Address
Organization Street Address
Organization City, ST Zip

Education/Support/Advocacy

Guard Your Temper

No nagging, yelling, arguing
Focus on the person
you know and love

**PROVIDE REASSURANCE
GENEROUSLY
AND OFTEN**

"I love you, and I care."

"You're not alone in this."

"I'm sorry you're in so
much pain."

"I'm always willing to listen."

"I'll be your friend
no matter what."

"This will pass, and we can
ride it out together."

"You are important to me."

"When this is all over,
I'll still be here."