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.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to prepare for crisis situations by having a plan in place. This includes identifying a list of resources and emergency contacts ahead of time. Here are some tips for preventing mental health crises in children and what to do when a crisis occurs:

**Support Your Child:**
- Encourage open communication about feelings and concerns.
- Set clear boundaries and expectations.
- Be patient and understanding.

**Prepare a Plan:**
- Identify warning signs and triggers.
- Develop coping strategies.
- Establish a support system.

**Provide Support:**
- Stay calm and reassuring.
- Use positive reinforcement.
- Seek professional help if needed.

**Seek Help When Needed:**
- Contact your child’s clinician or counselor.
- Reach out to family and friends.
- Consider emergency services.

**Remember:**
- Mental health crises can happen at any age.
- It’s important to seek help when needed.
- Remember, you’re not alone.

Managing A Crisis Situation

Children and teens with mental health conditions can experience crises when their symptoms become too much for them to bear. It can be a scary experience for a caregiver to see that their child is in a crisis and know where to turn for support. Below are some tips to help prevent a mental health crisis, as well as what to do when one occurs.

**Make A Plan**

The first step to handling a crisis is to prepare before it even happens. Make sure you have a 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? Which strategies that you know are the best ones for your child? What are some things that will make you more effective in helping your child manage symptoms? What are some things that will help you stay cool and calm in the face of a crisis?

**Collect Resources**

The list you create can help to save you a lot of time and stress. Your plan should also include details on where to find information about crisis services in your area. This can be particularly important if you’re not familiar with the resources available in your community. Make sure you have a list of emergency services such as mental health crisis support lines, local hospitals, and other resources that are available in your area. You should also make note of any important contact information in case you need it during a crisis.

**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 help your child 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
- THERAPEUTIC SUMMER CAMP

**Special Education**

- MANVILLE SCHOOL

**College Preparation**

- NEXT STEP

**Featured Resources**

- A Parent & Caregiver Guide to Helping Your Family Before, During, and After a Crisis
- Uva Guía Para Padres y Cuidadores de Niños con Crisis

- Una guía para padres y cuidadores de niños con crisis (in Spanish)
- Create a safe environment and practice mindfulness, meditation, and relaxation to reduce stress and anxiety.
- Contact your child’s clinician or counselor for guidance on how to manage symptoms.
- Seek professional help if needed, and remember to take care of yourself in the process.