

## Where to get help when you need it

You are not alone. There are many people who can help you and your child through this crisis.

The type of help your child needs depends on the level of distress and danger.

### For non-urgent needs:

- Contact a mental health professional for support.

### For urgent needs:

- Call a crisis line. They can help you figure out the best way to help your child at that time.

### For emergencies:

(when your child is in imminent danger)

- Call 911 or take your child to a hospital emergency department.

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## How to help when your child is in crisis

### When your child is experiencing an emotional crisis, they may struggle with:

- aggression
- mood swings
- suicidal behaviours
- self-harm
- risk-taking
- impulsive behaviours
- alcohol or drug abuse

The crisis affects your family too. You may not know what to say or how to help. You may feel alone and confused.

### This pamphlet can help by giving you:

- ✓ suggestions for responding to your child in a kind and helpful way
- ✓ information about getting help and support from professionals



# Remember...

## Understanding the crisis

**An emotional crisis is a complex problem. Many things can lead to a crisis, such as:**

- family stress
- trauma or abuse
- mental health disorders
- loss of important relationships
- conflict about sexual orientation
- bullying
- low self-esteem
- isolation

**Trust your instincts!  
You know your child best.  
Your child may need help:**

- If you identify any things that cause crisis
- If you see warning signs
- If you feel that something is “just not right”

## How you can help

You play a very important role in helping your child. You can help by talking with your child and helping them find healthy ways to cope with distress.

**To help, remember 3 things:**

**Be Brave, Be Kind, Be With**

## Be Brave

- **Put aside your own feelings so you can support your child.** Try not to take the behaviour personally.
- **Talk about the crisis.** This isn't easy, but it is absolutely necessary!
- Balance giving your child support with promoting their independence.

## Be Kind

- **Focus on your child's feelings and not the behaviour.** This will help you respond with kindness.
- **Validate your child's feelings.** You do not have to agree with or fully understand your child's feelings to be kind and accept those feelings.
- **Try saying:** *“I didn't know you were feeling so badly, thank you for telling me” or “I can see how that would be very stressful and difficult”.*

## Be With

- Listen closely. Make sure you are not rushed or distracted.
- Stay with your child through the difficulty, as much as possible.
- Offer hope and assurance that they are not alone.
- Spend time together, doing something you both enjoy.
- Offer support and get professional help when needed.
- It takes time to address what is causing the crisis.
- Learning to manage your own emotions and responses can be difficult.