



Guidelines for Mental Health Crisis Management

ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE MENTAL HEALTH WORKGROUP

What do I do when someone comes to me and may be suicidal?

- First determine if they are suicidal. **JUST ASK** – be direct and talk openly. You can simply ask “Are you thinking about suicide?” Asking about suicide does not encourage the person. It shows empathy and compassion.
- Listen to them. Allow them to share their thoughts, feelings, and fears. This person came to you for a reason; let them talk. Be an active listener – nodding, responding by rephrasing what they say, staying focused on them with your body language, keeping eye contact even if they do not.
- Be non-judgmental. Do not debate whether suicide is right or wrong, whether feelings are right or wrong. Listen, show support, and be empathic. Do not lecture.
- Offer hope that help is available. Offer to pray with them.
- Help them connect with mental health resources – look at the Archdiocese Help-Is-Here webpage with them.
- If the person is actively suicidal and has the means and a plan – do not leave them alone. You can call the suicide hotline* (see list of hotlines below) right there with them, or simply dial 911. If the person is willing and you are comfortable, you can take them to any hospital emergency room.

If the person is not suicidal, but is distressed, listen to them.

- Allow them to share their story, their feelings and concerns with you privately.
- Sometimes people just need to share with someone who they perceive as non-judgmental and who will not simply tell them what they need to do to solve their problem.
- It is unlikely that you will know how to ‘fix’ the issue. Just being there for them can be hugely helpful.
- Offer hope and reassure them that help is available. Offer to pray with them.
- Help them connect with mental health resources – look at the Archdiocese Help-Is-Here webpage with them.
- You can provide them with the suicide hotline* (see list of hotlines below) and tell them that the number is not just for suicide. It is a 24-hour hotline staffed with people who care and will listen to anyone in a crisis.

***The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:**

1-800-273-8255 or for Spanish 1-888-628-9454
Text HOME to 741 741 to reach the Crisis Text Line

Archdiocese Help Is Here resource website:

<https://www.archbalt.org/help-is-here/>

Warning signs that someone may be suicidal:

Talking about wanting to die
Looking for ways to commit suicide like buying a gun
Talking about having no reason to live and/or feeling hopeless
Talking about being a burden to others
Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
Increased use of substances
Withdrawing and socially isolating
Making 'goodbye' preparations (closing personal affairs, etc.)

To make a report of child abuse, neglect, or misconduct towards a child:

<https://www.archbalt.org/child-and-youth-protection/make-a-report/>

Self-care for YOU!

It is important to take some time for self-care after providing support for someone in a mental health crisis. Talk about it with a trusted colleague or friend, take some time to relax, spend time in prayer, and do something that you enjoy.

Maryland Resources

***Maryland Crisis Hotline - Call: 1-800-422-0009**

State-wide 24-hour crisis intervention and supportive counseling hotline for SUICIDE, family and relationship problems, shelter needs, violent or threatening domestic situations, loneliness, depression, chemical dependency issues and other issues.

***By County:** Mobile Crisis Teams consist of mental health professionals dispatched to community locations to provide immediate assessment, intervention and treatment to people experiencing a psychiatric emergency.

Allegany County	1-800-422-0009
Anne Arundel County Crisis Services	410-768-5522
Baltimore Child and Adolescent Response System (Baltimore City)	410-433-5175
Baltimore City	410-433-5175
Baltimore County	410-931-2214
Calvert County	1-800-422-0009
Carroll County	410-952-9552
Cecil County	1-800-422-0009
Frederick County	2-1-1 or 301-662-2255
Garret County	301-334-8970
Harford County Crisis Teams	800-639-8783
Howard County Crisis Teams	410-531-6677
Montgomery County Crisis System	240-777-4000
Prince George's County Crisis System	301-927-4500
Washington County	1-800-422-0009



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