

Chapter 2:

Help in a crisis

Chapter summary:

In this chapter we review:

- n How to seek help in a crisis
- n Advice for carers
- n Local crisis support services including out-of-hours help

What is a crisis?

A crisis is when you feel the situation is out of control and you need urgent help. Mental health problems may cause you to behave in ways which are unsafe to yourself or others. You and/or the people around you may feel under a lot of stress at such times and may need help with this.

Who to contact?

Who you should contact depends on what help you feel you need and which professionals you may already be in contact with. If you are being treated under the Care Programme Approach and have a care co-ordinator, it is normally best to try to contact that person first. They will be able to advise you what to do next. If you need urgent help out of working hours, you should contact the Emergency Reception Centre (ERC) (see below).

Alternatively, if you do not have a care co-ordinator, but are in contact with someone who knows your situation, such as your family doctor or a social worker it may be sensible to contact them and to seek their advice. If you have someone who acts as an advocate for you, helping you to tell the professionals what you want, you could also contact that person.

You (or someone on your behalf) can also contact the Community Mental Health Team. You should ask for the 'duty worker' who will best advise you on the next course of action. The duty worker can also assess you in your home (Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm).

Urgent help

If you have an urgent mental health need you can get immediate help, at the Emergency Reception Centre (ERC) at St Ann's Hospital, Tel: 020 8442 6706. However, if your main need is for physical health care you should go to the North Middlesex

Hospital Accident & Emergency Department (A&E). If in addition to your physical problem you have mental health needs, staff in A&E will arrange for a mental health professional to assess your needs and arrange any necessary urgent treatment. In the event of a serious emergency, you should always call 999 and ask for the relevant emergency service.

Carers

Carers should be aware that treatment cannot be initiated through the ERC unless the patient attends in person. The staff at the ERC will not be able to help if the patient is not present. If there is no immediate physical risk, but you feel the patient needs urgent help, you should contact his or her family doctor and ask for an urgent assessment. If you feel that there is serious risk to anyone's safety and you cannot persuade the patient to seek help through the ERC, you should contact the police.

Crisis services available

Services offered to you will depend upon the professional assessment of your needs. Crisis services will normally be arranged by your care co-ordinator, family doctor, the Emergency Reception Centre or Accident and Emergency. Where you need intensive care and support, this can be provided either in hospital or in the community through a Crisis and Assessment Treatment Team. Other community services, provided by the NHS, the local authority or the voluntary sector may also play a part in supporting you through a crisis; this will be managed by your care co-ordinator or the Emergency Reception Centre. There is also a self-referral system. However, this is only for people who have been cared for in the past by the Crisis Team.

Out-of-hours services available:

Crisis and Assessment Treatment Team (CATT)

Emergency Reception Centre

St Ann's Hospital

St Ann's Road

Tottenham N15 3TH

Tel: 020 8442 5888

Service: 24-hour psychiatric assessment area for people who are in crisis.

Haringey Social Services' duty social worker

Tel: 020 8348 3148

Service: The council provides an out-of-hours duty social worker who can provide out-of-hours emergency help and advice. During office hours, you should contact your assigned social worker.

Emergency Reception Centre

St Ann's Hospital

St Ann's Road

Tottenham N15 3TH

Tel: 020 8442 6706

Service: 24-hour psychiatric assessment area for people who are in crisis.

Emergency Services

Tel: 999

Service: In the event of a serious emergency the police, ambulance and fire services will provide assistance.

Psychiatric liaison nurses

North Middlesex Accident & Emergency

Sterling Way

Edmonton N18 1QX

Tel: 020 8887 2000

Service: A&E nurse led day-time assessment service - open seven days a week.

Samaritans

40 Queens Road

Bounds Green N11 2QU

Tel: 08457 909090

Tel: 020 8889 6888

Website: www.samaritans.org

Service: *24-hour confidential support to people in emotional distress.*

Additional crisis support

Alexandra Road Crisis Unit

32 Alexandra Road

Hornsey, N8 OPP

Tel: 020 8365 7287

Service: *This Haringey Council run service is for people who are experiencing mental and/or severe emotional distress and are in need of short-term, 24-hour support as an alternative to hospital admission. The unit also provides short-term respite stays for people suffering from mental health difficulties, or whose carers are in urgent need of respite. People are able to self refer. A professional risk assessment will be required.*

Police liaison:

Mental Health Liaison Team

St Ann's Road Police Station

c/o 398 High Road

Tottenham N17 9JA

Tel: 020 8345 0955

(in emergency, 999 should be called rather than this number)

Email: mentalhealth@met.police.uk

Service: *Crime prevention initiatives within mental health hospitals, attending and facilitating mental health assessments within private premises when a Section 135 Warrant is issued.*

Rethink (formerly National Schizophrenia Fellowship)

Enfield and Haringey Group

Contact: Pamela Maher

Tel: 020 8886 6065

Service: *Rethink works to help everyone affected by severe mental health problems, including schizophrenia, to recover a better quality of life.*

St Ann's Pharmacy

If you are an inpatient or an outpatient at St Ann's Hospital you can contact the pharmacist for details and advice on your medication.

Tel: 020 8442 6397

UK Psychiatric Pharmacy Group (UKPPG)

National Mental Health Drugs Telephone Helpline

Tel: 020 7919 2999