

**Lancaster County Office of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services**

Basic Information Series Volume: MH-2

**For Information Call:**

Crisis Intervention: 717-394-2631  
Mental Health Case Management 717-393-0421

## Crisis Intervention

# Basic Information Series

Persons experiencing anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, or another variety of mental health crisis can receive immediate assistance from the Lancaster County Crisis Intervention staff.

Crisis Intervention can assist in assessing what a person needs to alleviate the immediate crisis and then link the individual to appropriate services. This can be completed by an outreach to the person's location, via phone, or

the person coming in to the office.

Crisis Intervention also has the authority to arrange an involuntary commitment to an inpatient mental health unit.

Contact Crisis Intervention by phone at **717-394-2631** or email

([CrisisBHDS@lancastercountypa.gov](mailto:CrisisBHDS@lancastercountypa.gov)).

Crisis Intervention is operational 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

## Crisis Intervention Services

Crisis Intervention Services are intended to lessen or resolve a mental health emergency, acute trauma, or precipitating stress that may be causing a crisis situation. This is a short term strategy that uses support and problem solving to help a person change problematic behavior or thought patterns.

### Types of Crisis Intervention Services:

#### ◆ Telephone

Crisis Intervention can be accessed through a 24-hour telephone hotline (717-394-2631).

Encourage the individual experiencing the mental health crisis to call or be present during the call. If the individual is not present, the caller should have information to be used to identify the individual to the crisis worker.

#### ◆ Email

Crisis Intervention can be contacted via email ([CrisisBHDS@lancastercountypa.gov](mailto:CrisisBHDS@lancastercountypa.gov)). **The email is not monitored at all times; in the event of an emergency please call the office at (717)394-2631.**

#### ◆ Walk-In

Individuals can receive services at the office at 750 Eden Road, Lancaster, PA. Appointments can be either "walk-in" or scheduled.

#### ◆ Mobile

After being contacted by phone or email, crisis workers may provide crisis intervention services in the Lancaster County community.

The Crisis Intervention services include:

#### **Mental Health Evaluation & Assessment**

Crisis workers are equipped to assess and evaluate mental health. They utilize a variety of tools to help them assess risk of suicide, risk of homicide and aggression, mini-mental status, and overall mental health.

#### **Crisis Intervention Counseling**

Crisis Intervention Counseling is a short term strategy that employs support and problem solving to help a person change behavior patterns or problematic thinking. (This is unlike psychotherapy which is an ongoing process with specific treatment plans to address ongoing problems.)

#### **Referrals**

Crisis Intervention will refer individuals to get the support they need. It is important to note that crisis workers are not able to provide Crisis Intervention services to individuals dealing with substance abuse or an intellectual disability unless it is co-occurring with a serious mental illness. However, when in doubt, call, and if Crisis Intervention services are not appropriate, the crisis workers are able to make referrals to more appropriate services.

# Crisis Intervention Services

## Using Crisis Intervention Services

### When to Use Crisis Intervention

Crisis Intervention should be contacted when:

1. Clear and present danger
2. Inability to care
3. Suicidal ideation (with plans/means to carry out)
4. Self-mutilation

### What is "dangerous behavior"?

- Inflicting or attempting to inflict harm on others
- Attempting to commit suicide
- Substantially or attempting to substantially mutilate one's self
- Inability to satisfy their basic needs

### An Overview of the Petition Process

- Petitioner calls Crisis Intervention
- The Crisis Worker assists the petitioner in completing the commitment paperwork.

- The Crisis Worker contacts a delegate who reviews the petitions as a neutral professional trained in the requirements of the Mental Health Law of Pennsylvania.

- If the delegate approves that the petition meets the legal standards, the petition becomes a Civil Warrant. The police are authorized to take the individual to a local hospital for examination.

- The Crisis Worker meets with the individual at the emergency department and informs them of their rights.

- A physician will examine the individual within two hours of their rights being read.

- If the physician determines there is a need for hospitalization, they will be committed to a hospital with available beds on a mental health unit. If not, the individual will be discharged.

## Important Information for Petitioners

An individual requesting the involuntary mental health examination on behalf of another person is known as the **petitioner**. Here are important facts to know as the petitioner:

- ◆ Providing false information may result in criminal prosecution and criminal penalties.
- ◆ Petitions must be based on personal observation regarding behaviors in the last 30 days.
- ◆ Once the petition is accepted by the Mental Health Delegate, it is delivered to the police with jurisdiction over the address who will then pick up and transport the individual.
- ◆ Prior to the mental health examination, the individual will be informed of their rights — including the specifics of the petition and the name of the petitioner.
- ◆ Placement for psychiatric treatment may

be sought at any approved facility in Pennsylvania. Local units will be consulted first, but the individual may be placed outside of the county.

- ◆ Petitioners may be required to testify at a 303 hearing about the 302 statement if treatment is to be extended.
- ◆ Should a petition be accepted, a form will be sent notifying the State Police of the commitment, which will result in the individual losing their right to carry a firearm.
- ◆ An emergency mental health commitment cannot be used in place of legal eviction procedures, regulations, or laws.
- ◆ Once a petition is accepted it cannot be withdrawn. It can only be dismissed by a physician's examination finding that the mental health treatment is not warranted.

Lancaster County Office of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services  
Basic Information Series: Volume MH-2

Updated October 2023 by Lancaster County Behavioral Health and Developmental Services,  
750 Eden Road, Lancaster, PA 17601