

# Campus Crisis Response Quick Guide

Evidence-based protocols for responding to mental health emergencies

**IN AN IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY, CALL 911**  
For crisis support: 988 Lifeline | Text HOME to 741741

## 1. RECOGNIZING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

**Immediate Danger Signs (Call 911):**

- Active suicidal behavior or attempt in progress
- Possession of weapons with intent to harm self or others
- Severe intoxication with risk of harm
- Physical aggression or violence
- Complete break from reality with dangerous behavior

**Warning Signs Requiring Urgent Response:**

- Expressing suicidal thoughts or plans
- Giving away possessions or saying goodbye
- Sudden calm after period of depression
- Severe panic attack or anxiety episode
- Psychotic symptoms (hallucinations, delusions)
- Self-harm injuries
- Severe emotional distress (uncontrollable crying, rage)

## 2. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Step	Action	Key Points
1. <b>ASSESS</b>	Evaluate immediate safety	Is there danger to self or others? Any weapons? Is the person responsive?
2. <b>STAY</b>	Remain calm and present	Use calm voice. Don't leave the person alone. Listen without judgment.
3. <b>CONTACT</b>	Call for appropriate help	911 for emergencies. Campus security. Counseling center crisis line.
4. <b>SUPPORT</b>	Provide emotional support	Validate feelings. Avoid minimizing. Don't promise confidentiality.

5. HANDOFF	Transfer care to professionals	Stay until help arrives. Provide context to responders. Follow up later.
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3. DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

Communication Strategies:

- Speak slowly and calmly in a low, steady voice
- Use simple, clear language — avoid jargon
- Give the person space — maintain safe distance
- Avoid sudden movements or threatening postures
- Listen actively and reflect back what you hear
- Acknowledge their feelings without judgment
- Avoid arguing, criticizing, or challenging delusions
- Offer choices when possible to provide sense of control

Helpful Phrases:

- "I'm here to help you."
- "I can see you're going through something really difficult."
- "Your safety is what matters most right now."
- "Can you tell me what you need?"
- "Let's figure this out together."

4. POST-CRISIS PROTOCOL

Immediate Follow-up (Within 24 hours):

- Document the incident according to campus policy
- Notify appropriate campus officials (Dean of Students, Counseling Center)
- Check on the individual's status if appropriate
- Debrief with colleagues or supervisor
- Consider your own emotional needs — seek support if needed

Supporting Recovery:

- Connect the individual with ongoing support services
- Coordinate with academic advisors on any accommodations
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality
- Follow up periodically as appropriate to your role

5. QUICK REFERENCE: CRISIS CONTACTS

Resource	Contact	When to Use
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Emergency Services	911	Immediate danger to life
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline	Call or Text 988	Suicidal crisis, emotional distress
Crisis Text Line	Text HOME to 741741	Need to text rather than call
Campus Security	[Your Campus Number]	Campus emergencies, safety concerns
Counseling Center	[Your Campus Number]	Non-emergency mental health support
SAMHSA Helpline	1-800-662-4357	Substance abuse crisis
Trevor Project (LGBTQ+)	1-866-488-7386	LGBTQ+ youth crisis

*This guide is for educational purposes and does not replace professional training. Campus personnel should complete formal crisis intervention training. Always follow your institution's specific policies and procedures.*