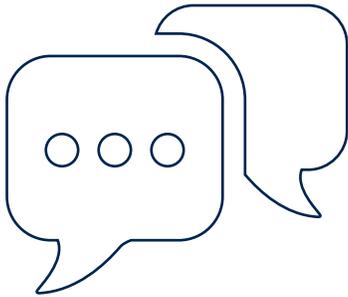


# CRISIS PREPARATION

Let's talk about mental health crises.



A crisis is any situation in which a person's behaviors put them at risk of hurting themselves or others. A crisis is also when a person cannot resolve the situation with the skills and resources available to them. It is never more important to have empathy for someone who is experiencing serious mental illness (SMI) than when they're in crisis.

**It's rare for an individual with SMI to suddenly lose control of their thoughts, feelings and behavior — it's usually a gradual process.** There are often early warning signs that suggest that someone's symptoms are returning or getting worse and need attention.



## COMMON WARNING SIGNS

- ! Agitation
- ! Anxiety

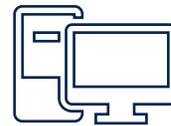
- ! Isolation
- ! Paranoia

- ! Sleep disturbances — too much, too little, not at all
- ! Uncontrollable crying

If you notice any of these warning signs, don't ignore them.



Encourage your loved one to talk to their physician or therapist as soon as possible



Contact their physician or therapist yourself and express your concern

## CRISIS PLANS

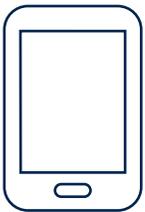
**Crises can still occur even when you watch symptoms, follow treatment plans, and actively involve mental health professionals in care.** Unfortunately, unpredictability is a common factor in SMI. That's why you should always be prepared.

When your loved one feels up for it, sit down with them and develop a crisis plan. It may be called a psychiatric advance directive (PAD) or a mental health advance directive. Your crisis plan or PAD should include:

- ✓ Person's general information
- ✓ Contact information for trusted family members and friends
- ✓ Contact information for health care professionals
- ✓ Strategies and treatments that have worked in the past

- ✓ A list of what might make the situation worse and a list of what might help
- ✓ Current medication(s) and dosages
- ✓ Current diagnoses
- ✓ Person's treatment preferences
- ✓ Contact information for nearby crisis centers or emergency rooms
- ✓ Safety plans (i.e., when outside help, like 911, must be called)

**PADs are most effective when they are developed together with the person who is experiencing SMI.** It should not be something that's passed on to them from their treatment team and family as something that they're told is "best" for them. The plan must incorporate everyone's preferences as much as possible.



**SMI Adviser offers a smartphone app that helps create, store and share a PAD. It is secure, private, free, and easy to use.**

The app is called My Mental Health Crisis Plan. You can find it in the App Store for Apple devices or in Google Play for Android devices. There are videos that describe what a PAD is and show you the clear, easy steps to use the app. You can also download the app now at [www.SMIadviser.org/padapp](http://www.SMIadviser.org/padapp).

## RECOVERY



**RECOVERY** from serious mental illness is not only possible — for many people today, it is probable.

**RECOVERY** is a journey, not a destination.

**RECOVERY** is often misinterpreted as a day when an individual is "healed" and done with treatment. Unfortunately, recovery is not an event. It is an incremental process towards wellness with good days and not-so-good days.

Some information that you read or hear may make it seem that **RECOVERY** is rare or unlikely. But people can and do recover from serious mental illness.

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