



V. Understanding Behavioral Health Emergencies

A Behavioral Health Emergency is a serious mental health and/or substance use problem. The problem is so severe that an average person would think that not getting help would cause more serious problems, such as:

- Putting the person's health at serious risk;
- Having disorganized or dangerous thoughts;
- Threatening harm or causing harm to self; or
- Threatening harm or causing harm to others.

WHO DO YOU CALL IN AN EMERGENCY?

In a mental health and/or substance use emergency, you should do one of the following immediately (You **do not** need to get approval to get emergency services):

- Call 911 if a life is in danger;
- Go to the nearest emergency room;
- Call your provider, if you have one; or
- If it's a child or adolescent in crisis, call the emergency mobile psychiatric service for your town at 211. (see Appendix II)
- For adults 18 and older, you can find the crisis services using the town locator on the DMHAS website: [Crisis Services](#) or call 9-1-1.

When you call for help, try to remain calm, stay focused and state clearly why you and/or your child is not safe or why the safety of others is at risk. Speak clearly. Let the person know why emergency care is needed. Be prepared to give the following information as well as answer additional questions:

- Name, phone number and address of caller;
- Name of person needing evaluation;
- Why you are calling including diagnosis if known and actions/signs observed;
- Examples as to why you or your child is not able to keep safe, or the safety of others is at risk;
- Give a brief history of the build up of the crisis situation over the last 24-48 hours; and
- Past history of hospitalizations.

After an emergency you should contact your provider to continue needed treatment and support.

DO YOU HAVE A WELLNESS RECOVERY PLAN?

If the answer is yes, refer to your wellness recovery plan in case of a mental health or substance use emergency. If you do not have one it is important to work with your provider to put one in place immediately for you and/or your child.

WHAT IS A WELLNESS RECOVERY PLAN?

The Wellness Recovery Plan should be put together before it is needed and put in a place that is easy to find. The plan should include people, friends/family, providers, and activities that can help to calm the person in crisis. It should also include important phone numbers and contact information. Your current provider is a good person to help you put together your crisis plan. During a crisis, use this plan to remind you of steps to take and of important information that is easy to forget during a crisis.

If there are children in the home, make sure that you include a plan of who will care for them during the crisis. Be sure to include all contact information including phone numbers and addresses.

Please refer to the crisis plan form in the appendix for guidance.

WHAT ARE ADVANCE DIRECTIVES?

Connecticut law gives a person who is 18 years or older the right to make decisions about his or her health care. An Advance Directive for behavioral health is a way of planning for your future behavioral care in case you become ill and can no longer make your own health care decisions. An Advance Directive must contain the following: your signature, the signature of two witnesses and a notary public and the date the form was signed.

The Advance Directive is a legal document with a set of written instructions that will tell your provider the following:

- The kind of treatment you want or do not want;
- Where you would like to have your treatment;
- The name of a trusted person who may make decisions for you if you are not able to make them on your own (although you do not have to name a specific person);
- Who should be notified immediately if you are admitted to a psychiatric facility; and
- Who should have temporary custody of your child(ren).

You may call the Office of Protection and Advocacy for help with talking to your personal physician or your personal attorney by dialing toll free at (800) 842-7303 or (860) 297-4300 (Phone line also has TTY accessibility).

Adult members, families and youth have important things to tell us. We would like to hear about your experiences and get your input on issues regarding the delivery of behavioral health services. We have a Consumer and Family Advisory Committee that meets on a monthly basis and consists of consumers and families who have experience in the HUSKY A, HUSKY B, HUSKY C, HUSKY D, and the Department of Children and Families system. The role of the Committee is to advise the CT BHP on members' interests and needs related to services as well as giving consumer and family input on programs and quality initiatives.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the CT BHP Consumer and Family Advisory Committee please call: (877) 552-8247.