

## Mental health crisis overview, causes and coping strategies?

Ashok Agrawal\*

Department of Medicine, Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh, India

### Introduction

The symptoms of a mental health crisis vary from one person to the next. Even so, there are ways to be prepared in an emergency. When someone's behaviours prevent them from functioning or signal that they may hurt themselves or others, they are experiencing a mental health crisis [1].

A crisis might feel overwhelming, and it may appear that your typical coping mechanisms are no longer effective. Psychiatric crises and emergencies are personal to the individual, yet they can resemble one another in terms of how people feel and act throughout the crisis. Many people are unable to care for themselves, their prior mental health disorders have worsened, and they threaten or try self-harm.

Though untreated mental health problems might result in a crisis, it's a common fallacy that this is the only time they happen. Things happen, and mental health crises can strike people who don't have a recognised mental illness or who are following a treatment plan.

### *Difference between a mental health emergency and a crisis?*

Although there is some debate about the distinction between a "mental health emergency" and a "mental health crisis," most individuals use these phrases interchangeably [2].

In its comprehensive guide to handling a crisis, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) uses the terms "crisis" and "emergency" interchangeably. Many others, such as Psych Central, have followed suit.

Others define a mental health emergency as a life-threatening scenario in which someone is a danger to oneself or others, whereas a crisis is not life-threatening but leaves the person profoundly distressed. Others define an emergency as someone who is trying suicide, whereas a crisis is defined as someone who is contemplating or planning suicide. People who are experiencing a "mental health emergency," "crisis," or "mental breakdown" require immediate assistance [3].

Suicide or self-harm threats or attempts are both a mental health crisis and a medical emergency.

### *What causes a mental health crisis?*

The causes of a mental health crisis are as distinct as the indications of a mental health crisis. Something that causes a crisis in one individual may not cause a crisis in another. This

can be seen in how people react and cope in the aftermath of natural disasters or the loss of loved ones [4].

There are a variety of factors that could contribute to a crisis, including:

1. Loss
2. A painful experience
3. Relationship changes (e.g., a divorce or split)
4. Feeling alone or without a support system.
5. Modifying or discontinuing mental health treatment.
6. Losing a job or failing a class.
7. Discrimination
8. Natural disasters, violence, or terrorism are all examples of natural disasters.
9. Medical diagnosis
10. Drug abuse

According to study from 2021, certain persons are more prone to have a mental health crisis, including:

1. Those who have suffered financial losses.
2. People who have pre-existing medical conditions.
3. Persons who live in densely populated areas.

According to a 2015 review of data, some patients with serious mental illnesses may lack robust coping skills. When they are exposed to severe stress, their coping mechanisms may fail, resulting in a crisis [5].

### *How to help someone else in a crisis*

Depending on the circumstances, you might be really stressed out if you suspect someone you know is in distress. It's critical to stay cool (or at least appear to be for them) and figure out what kind of help they require.

You might begin by determining whether they are a danger to themselves or others. This can assist you in determining who to contact.

The goal in a crisis, according to NAMI, is to de-escalate. You can use a variety of strategies, including:

- Maintain your composure. Avoiding increasing panic by speaking gently and without raising your voice can assist. You should also avoid arguing or overreacting with them.

\*Correspondence to: Ashok Agrawal, Department of Medicine, Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh, India, E-mail: Agrawal.ashok12@gmail.com

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The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) even advises that you take it slowly.

- Listen. Listening can assist you in determining what they require and comprehending their current symptoms.
- Find out how you can assist. Especially if you aren't with them in person, expressing support and care can help them feel less alone. See what you can do for them, but keep in mind that they might not be in the right frame of mind to realise what they require, so be explicit. "Do you need me to call someone for you?" you might inquire. "or" Do you require transportation to the hospital?"
- Give them choices. Even though you feel compelled to take command of the situation, someone else may be overwhelmed. Instead, you should provide them with options and wait.
- Give them some breathing room. You don't want them to feel hemmed in or constrained. You should also wait until they give you permission before touching them.

It's critical to exit any situation where you don't feel comfortable as soon as possible. While you stay safe, you may still make sure they get the support they need.

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