

## **TELEPHONE CRISIS INTERVENTION**

### **PRACTICAL TIPS FOR TELEPHONE CRISIS INTERVENTION**

Callers to a crisis service are often fearful, angry and confused. They may be ambivalent about calling, and unsure about what they can expect or even want from the crisis workers. Callers need a sense of reassurance that the crisis service can help. Crisis workers can convey this sense by relating to the caller in a calm, understanding and empathetic manner.

#### **Callers may have contacted the crisis service in the past**

- Access any previous documentation.
- Compare the child's previous and current situation.
- Check if previous recommendations have been followed.

#### **Callers may be in the midst of an emergency but refuse to disclose identifying information**

- Keep the caller on the line and direct someone else to call 911.
- Use another phone line to call 911 when alone.
- Do not use the phone again if the caller hangs up or is disconnected. The police may be able to trace the call if the phone has not been used.

#### **Callers in crisis may be highly anxious and need assistance in getting composed to provide pertinent information**

- Ask the caller to calm down and speak slowly.
- Validate the caller's concerns.

#### **Callers may get right into "story telling"**

- Get pertinent information early on in the call.
- Determining a child's risk is paramount.

#### **Callers in crisis need the tools to deal with the situation constructively**

- Give the caller a sense of direction and a sense of empowerment.
- Inform the caller of any procedures that will be followed throughout the call.

#### **Callers in crisis may be verbally abusive or critical of other services**

- Do not hang up on an abusive caller.
- Be direct and ask the caller to calm down or suggest they call back when they can be more appropriate.
- Be careful not to become defensive.
- Do not over-identify with the caller's concerns about other services.

#### **Callers in crisis may hear only what they want or need to hear**

- Be clear with recommendations and directions.
- Ask the caller to paraphrase.

