

Types of Mental Health Care

Information for Families

Mental health care services are separated into different levels of care that specialize in treating different concerns. Matching a concern with the appropriate level of care is an important part of treatment. If the level is too high or too low, it could be unhelpful or intensify a concern.

A service's level of care is based on two things:

- Intensity – How often appointments happen, how long they last, where they take place and number of medical professionals involved.
- Restrictiveness – The impact it has on a patient's access to everyday items and activities.

Although it can sometimes be frustrating, repeating or using several different levels of care during treatment can be beneficial. Every organization is unique, but generally levels of care include:

Highest level of care

Inpatient Hospitalization

- Brief admission to a hospital for a new or worsening concern.
- Need for hospitalization is determined by an Emergency Department assessment.
- Services can include mental health therapy, medication management and support from other specialists.

Residential Program

- Patients stay in a treatment facility for up to several months to treat long-term concerns.
- Services can include mental health therapy, medication management and support from other specialists.

Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP)

- Usually involves daily therapy for at least five hours a day, and lasting at least one to two weeks.
- Services can include group counseling, medication management and support from other specialists. Individual and family counseling may also be offered.

Intensive Home-Based Program

- A therapist meets patients weekly or multiple times a week in their home or other community location.
- Therapy usually involves individual and family appointments.

Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)

- Four to six weeks of two to three therapy sessions per week in the office or through telehealth.
- Services include group counseling and medication management. Individual counseling may also be offered.

Lowest level of care

Outpatient Counseling

- Therapy sessions once a week or every couple of weeks, depending on need and availability.
- Most sessions are in the office or through telehealth, but some organizations offer sessions in community locations.
- Therapy can involve individual, family or group appointments.

Crisis Services, like Mobile Response Teams, Crisis Phone Lines, or emergency departments are available at all levels (except inpatient). Crisis services help work through tough days and identify what level of care may be most helpful. Their services focus on immediate safety.

Mental health medication can be prescribed at any level of care. Talk to your doctor or therapy team if you are interested in medication. They can help you find support and decide if medication is an appropriate part of treatment.

Help is Available 24/7

If you or a loved one is experiencing suicidal thoughts, text or call the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.
In an emergency, call 911 or go to your local emergency room.

If you have a question about care, talk to your child's treatment team.



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Mental Health Crisis Visit

What to Expect and How to Prepare

When you are recommended to go to your local Emergency Department (ED) for further evaluation of a mental health concern, you may feel overwhelmed or in shock, which is natural. The first thing to do is take a breath. Not every ED or visit is the same, but there are some things you can expect and ways to prepare.



You will work with mental health professionals to complete an assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to understand why you came to the ED and work together to create a recommended plan to move forward safely.



ED assessments may lead to a stay in the hospital, but does not guarantee it. Other recommendations may include:

- Returning home with a connection for therapy and a plan for safety.
- Resources for community crisis services for immediate support.



Sometimes the best recommendation isn't what you were expecting.

- It is ok to ask for an explanation of the recommendation.
- Tell the team if you are concerned and be open to a conversation about options.



To make the safest recommendation, we need everyone's help. It is important that a parent or legal guardian is available for the assessment.



Sometimes EDs are busy and you may have to wait for your assessment. It is ok to ask for things you need while you wait.



It is unlikely that an ED will prescribe or change medication during assessments. They may recommend following up with your primary care doctor or connect you to a psychiatrist to discuss medication.



Hospitals have rules for personal items allowed in the hospital during assessments for safety. This means you may be asked to change clothes or store personal items. It can be frustrating, and the hospital will make sure you get your things back.



You will meet a lot of people who will ask questions to get to know you. It is ok to ask them their name, their job, who will see you next or ask for a break.

Help is available 24/7

If you or a friend are experiencing suicidal thoughts text or call the **988** Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or call **1-888-418-6777** in Ohio to connect with the Mobile Response and Stabilization Team (not available in all counties). If there is a medical emergency or you need emergency assistance traveling to your local ED, call **911**.



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