

Crisis Can't Wait



Know the Signs

Black/African ancestry individuals living with serious mental illness experience significant disparities with access to crisis response resources. Only one in three Black adults with serious mental illness receives treatment.* It is critical that Black/African ancestry communities learn to recognize the signs of a serious mental health condition. Recognizing the signs of potential mental health struggles is crucial for providing timely support and encouraging early intervention.

Common behaviors that may be a clue that a mental health crisis is developing:

- Inability to perform daily tasks like bathing, brushing teeth, brushing hair, changing clothes
- Rapid mood swings, increased energy level, inability to stay still, pacing; suddenly depressed, withdrawn; suddenly happy or calm after period of depression
- Increased agitation, verbal threats, violent, out-of-control behavior, destroys property
- Isolation from school, work, family, and friends
- Abusive behavior to self and others, including substance use or self-harm; cutting is one example
- Loses touch with reality (psychosis); unable to recognize family or friends, confused, strange ideas, thinks they're someone they're not, doesn't understand what people are saying, hears voices, sees things that aren't there, unreasonably suspicious

Common warning signs of suicide include:

- Giving away personal possessions
- Talking as if they're saying goodbye or going away forever
- Taking steps to tie up loose ends, like organizing personal papers or paying off debts
- Making or changing a will
- Stockpiling pills or obtaining a weapon, preoccupation with death
- Sudden cheerfulness or calm after a period of despondency

It is a sign of strength to seek help

*Source: [Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#)

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call or text 988. The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides a 24-hour confidential connection with a trained crisis counselor.



The Crisis Can't Wait Campaign was created to improve access to care for people experiencing serious mental health conditions in Black/African ancestry communities. To learn more visit nami.org/chea.

