

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
(CCDCFS)  
Policy Statement**

**Policy Chapter:** Psychiatric Care  
**Policy Number:** 9.04.04  
**Policy Name:** Emergency Mental Health Crisis

**Original Effective Date:** 07/01/1994  
**Revision Date(s):** 08/01/2013, 11/30/1994  
**Current Revision Date:** 08/01/2016  
**Approved By:** Thomas D. Pristow

**PURPOSE:** To establish a protocol when a Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (CCDCFS) involved person experiences a mental health crisis that puts themselves and/or others at risk.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all CCDCFS staff with individuals on their caseload at risk of harmful behavior to themselves and/or others.

**POLICY**

When a CCDCFS involved person exhibits behaviors that are harmful to themselves and/or others, CCDCFS staff coordinates services through the Mobile Crisis Team and/or community emergency response providers to ensure the individual's safety. This includes assessment/evaluation; safety planning; outpatient services and/or hospitalization.

**PROCEDURES**

- I. When CCDCFS staff members are involved with a family where an individual is at risk of self-harm and/or harm to others, the staff member determines the level of urgency. Some examples for consideration include, but are not limited to:
  - Suicidal/homicidal ideation (thoughts about or preoccupation with suicide/homicide)
  - Intention to act upon suicidal/homicidal thoughts; has a plan (written note or threat, posting on social media) and/or available means (access to weapons, sharp objects or harmful substances)
  - Attempted suicide (current and/or historical)
  - Presence of any current physical injuries/symptoms in an attempt to harm oneself or others (ie. severe lacerations; report and/or evidence of overdose or swallowing of potentially harmful substances/objects)

- A. For individuals at life threatening risk of self-harm and/or harm to others:
  - 1. The CCDCFS staff member ensures that the individual is transported to the nearest emergency room. A call to 911 may be necessary to assist in stabilization and safe transport.
  - 2. The CCDCFS staff member notifies his/her Supervisor.
  
- B. For individuals at non-life threatening risk of self-harm and/or harm to others:
  - 1. The CCDCFS staff member contacts the Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) for assistance at **216-623-6888**.
  - 2. The CCDCFS staff member notifies his/her Supervisor to determine the next steps in addressing the situation. The purpose of such contact is to determine if, based on the individual's condition, crisis intervention is immediately needed beyond the usual resources of CCDCFS or beyond the individual's primary mental health provider.
  - 3. While waiting for the MCT staff member to arrive, the CCDCFS staff member remains with the individual until a responsible person is present to ensure safety of all involved parties. If unable to keep the individual safe until the MCT arrives, the CCDCFS staff member immediately calls 911 for assistance and intervention.
  - 4. The CCDCFS staff member ensures that the next steps and safety plan coordinated by the MCT staff are communicated to all parties involved.
  
- C. If there is a question about how to handle the emergency mental health crisis, the CCDCFS staff member contacts 911 and/or MCT and follows up with his/her supervisor.
  
- D. For adults at risk of harm to their children a report will be made to the 696-KIDS hotline.
  
- E. If the adult parent/guardian/caretaker refuses to follow the advice of the service professionals responding to the youth, the need for an emergency staffing is then discussed with the supervisor and scheduled as deemed necessary.