

What to do in a Crisis

If you feel that your mental health is deteriorating you must respond. Don't take a wait and see approach. Sometimes all that will be necessary is to take some time out, rest and possibly increase your medication but at other times this won't be enough.

The first thing to do is to activate your personal crisis plan. See our advice sheet about relapses for more information.

If you don't have a crisis plan then you should think about getting professional help early on. Schizophrenia presents such a huge threat to our wellbeing that we cannot be expected to cope with it alone. Don't worry about asking for help, it is your right. There are a number of ways in which you can get professional help in a crisis:

- If you are still being looked after by the mental health service get in touch with your psychiatrist or community psychiatric nurse.
- Make an appointment to see your GP.
- Call NHS 111 (NHS Direct)

In Emergencies

If the situation is an emergency and you feel that you or someone else is in danger then:

- Go to your local accident and emergency department and ask to see the duty psychiatrist.
- Contact your local duty social worker
- Dial 999

Try to seek sanctuary: get to a safe place such as your own home away from sources of stress and, if possible, with people you trust. If you live alone get in touch with a trusted friend or family member and tell them that you are in crisis.

If you are taking antipsychotic medication make sure you take your daily dose. Increase the dose if you have agreed with your doctor beforehand to do so at times of crisis.

Someone to talk to

If you need someone to talk to who is not a medical professional try contacting the Samaritans.

Tel: 08457 90 90 90

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Web: www.samaritans.org

The Samaritans are a UK based charity staffed by volunteers who are there to listen to people in emotional distress and those who are desperate. They are not part of the NHS or government and what you tell them is completely confidential. They are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.