

How do I cope with a crisis and who do I go to for help?

Individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can have medical, neurological, behavioural, and mental health issues that may result in difficult or even crisis situations. Despite our desire to keep things calm, sometimes things can get out of control. It is important to be aware of, and alert to, the early warning signs that things might be getting out of hand (that is, is an individual out of control, or are they at risk of hurting themselves or others?). The following steps can be taken to create a general safety plan:

- **Prevention.** Make a list of the people, places, and things that cause certain behaviours that can lead to a crisis situation. Also write down, and monitor for, warning signs that the individual is becoming distressed. Think about all of the places in which your child needs to be protected (this probably includes home, school, friends' homes, community centers, etc.). Then, be sure to evaluate these places for safety and put preventative measures into place in each area. These safety measures/plans can be included in the individual's formal documents, such as in an Individual Program Plan (IPP) or Individual Service Agreement (ISA).
- **Give your child a form of identification** (wallet card or bracelet) with contact names and numbers listed. Make sure your child always wears or carries this identification, especially if wandering could be a concern. Consider purchasing a child locator and clip it to your child's shoe, belt, etc.
- **Coping Strategies.** Make a list of calming strategies that help your child to cope. Consult with your team of professionals on strategies to manage problematic behaviours, thoughts, and moods.
- **Circle of Support.** Make a list of friends and family members to contact. Include family and community members who come into daily contact with the individual. Keep in mind school personnel, care providers, neighbors, extended family, etc. Make sure you have contacted each person and discussed your most pressing concerns about the individual's safety.
- **Contact Help.** Create a list of professionals and agencies to contact if you need to discuss concerns or if you need to put a safety plan into action.

RESOURCES

The Resource Centre (a Sinneave Family Foundation initiative) does not endorse or guarantee the exhaustive, complete, accurate or up-to-date nature of information provided and does not assume any risk for the outcome of information or referrals provided.

Children's Cottage Society

A variety of programs to prevent abuse and neglect: support services, respite programs, crisis nurseries, and parent education. They provide crisis respite for parents of children up to age 12.

Phone: 403.283.4200 or 403.233.2273 (24/7 Crisis Line)
Address: 204, 2120 Kensington Road NW, Calgary, AB T2N 3R7
Email: admin@childrenscottage.ab.ca
Website: childrenscottage.ab.ca

Kids Help Phone

Free, anonymous and confidential counselling service available 24/7 for youth 20 years and under. Both online and phone services available.

Phone: 1.800.668.6868
Website: kidshelpphone.ca

Alberta Health Services – Mobile Response Team

A multi-disciplinary team which offers crisis intervention, prevention, urgent psychiatric assessments, trauma response and mental health education within Calgary. The mobile response team is accessed through the Distress Centre.

Phone: Distress Centre: 403.266.4357 (Help), Professional Referral Line 403.297.2940
Address: Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre, 1213 - 4 Street SW, Calgary, AB T2R 0X7
Email: mobileresponse.team@ahs.ca
Website: albertahealthservices.ca/info/service.aspx?id=432

Calgary Distress Center

Provides crisis support, professional counselling, and referrals to social services at no cost.

Phone: 403.266.HELP (4357)
Address: 300, 1010 - 8th Avenue SW, Calgary, AB T2P 1J2
Email: help@distresscentre.com
Website: distresscentre.com

Canada Mental Health Association (CMHA)

CMHA – Calgary Region supports **individuals** with a mental health or substance use concern through our Workshops & Classes, Drop-in Groups and One-on-One Supports to live independently in the community by providing: emotional support and encouragement; life skills, coaching in areas such as budgeting, nutrition, self-care and wellness; referrals for professionals, community, and social supports and resources; education and awareness around mental health; and the development of strong coping skills to manage their recovery and mental wellness.

Phone: 403.297.1700
Address: 105-1040 – 7 Avenue SW Calgary AB T2P 3G9
Email: info@cmha.calgary.ab.ca
Website: cmha.calgary.ab.ca

Dial 211

211 is a telephone service run by the United Way, Distress Centre Calgary, The City of Calgary and Inform Alberta, that helps connect individuals to a variety of social services and programs. This referral services connects you to resources for finding food, finding work, paying bills, and accessing education, health care, child care services, legal supports and more. This service is free, confidential, and operates 24/7.

Phone: 2-1-1
Website: 211alberta.ca

PACT Police and Crisis Team

Joint initiative Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Calgary Police Service (CPS); pairs a CPS officer with an AHS clinician (social worker, registered psychiatric nurse or registered nurse) to provide crisis intervention, urgent psychiatric assessments and professional consultations.

Website: albertahealthservices.ca/info/service.aspx?id=1050105

Calgary Police Service

Vulnerable people and those who care for them can register with the Calgary Police Service Vulnerable Person Self-Registry. Register online at www.calgarypolice.ca and enter the key word, Self-Registry, in the search function.

Phone: 403.266.1234 (Non-Emergency Line)
Address: 5111 – 47th Street NE, Calgary, AB T3J 3R2
Email: cps@calgarypolice.ca
Website: calgarypolice.ca

Suicide Prevention

Call the suicide prevention number if you, or someone you care about, is feeling hopeless or thinking about suicide.

Phone: 1.800.784.2433

Living Works

Provide a number of suicide prevention courses for participants 15 years and older. The workshops are open to anyone with an interest in suicide prevention.

Phone: 403.209.0242
Toll Free: 1.888.733.5484 (in NA)
Address: 119, 807 - 42 Avenue SE, Calgary, AB T2G 1Y8
Email: info@livingworks.net
Website: livingworks.net

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