

# Youth Mental Health First Aid

A crisis is defined as a time of intense difficulty, trouble, danger, or distress. It may be mental, emotional, or physical.



THE YMHA ACTION PLAN: ALGEE

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## ASSESS/APPROACH

### May become a crisis:

- Panic attack
- Aggressive behaviors
- Substance misuse
- Traumatic event

### Immediate crisis:

- Medical emergency
- Non suicidal self-injury
- Suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Severe psychotic state
- Severe effects of alcohol or drug use

- 1 Plan to talk privately about your concerns at a mutually convenient time and place.
- 2 Be aware the person may not open up.
- 3 A young person may downplay what they are going through.
- 4 Do not pressure them—let them know you are ready to talk when they are.

## LISTEN NONJUDGMENTALLY

- Look for both verbal and nonverbal cues and how they are conveyed.
- Allow the youth to express their thoughts uninterrupted
- When appropriate, ask questions, but do not push.
- Use “I” statements to convey what you have observed.
- Remember, it’s about them, not you.

## REASSURANCE & INFORMATION

- Reassurance is a statement, comment, or action that helps remove a person’s fears.
- Information helps a person understand a concept, discuss options and next steps, and indicates when they need additional help or support.

DOES NOT SOUND LIKE	SOUNDS LIKE
I remember my first breakup, here's what you need to do.	Breakups can be tough, it's natural for you to be hurt and upset.
You really need to talk to a counselor about that.	I'm here if you want to talk. There are also people who are trained to help you work through these feelings.
You'll get over it. Just don't worry about it so much.	You are not alone.
The way you're handling this isn't healthy.	I care about you and I've noticed a change in ____ (mood, eating, exercising, etc.).

## ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONAL HELP

### If the youth doesn't want help:

- Encourage them to talk to someone they trust.
- Never threaten with punitive action or hospitalization.
- Remain patient.
- Remain friendly and open or they may not want your help in the future.

### Encourage self-help and other support strategies:

- Relaxation training and breathing exercises
- Exercise
- Proper nutrition and sleep

## REASSURANCE & INFORMATION

- Speak slowly and confidently with a gentle, caring tone.
- Don't argue or challenge.
- Don't threaten.
- Don't raise your voice or talk too fast.
- Use positive words.
- Stay calm and avoid nervous behaviors.
- Don't restrict their movement.
- Be aware of what might increase their fear and aggression.
- Pause if needed during the conversation.