

Civil Commitment

What is a "mental illness"?

"Mental illness" is defined in section 5122.01(A) of the Revised Code as "a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory that grossly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life.

What is a mental crisis?

A person undergoing a mental crisis is far more than just emotionally distraught. Usually, but not always, there have been a number of factors which have placed extraordinary stress on the individual's mental stability. In some cases, a person's mental state deteriorates over time and can be increasingly noticeable to close friends and family members. Coping skills begin to fail and as mental stress continues even the seemingly smallest event can trigger a crisis.

Whatever the cause, an episode of mental crisis is usually quite apparent. The victim obviously lacks control of thoughts and sometimes actions. By and large, most people become withdrawn, depressed and tearful with an extreme feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. In some cases they recognize and verbalize their extreme fear and need for help. In dealing with a mental crisis there is always the potential of an outburst of anger, aggressiveness and even physical violence.

When interacting with a person undergoing a mental crisis, always expect the unexpected. As you begin to interact with the person expect incoherence and unusual thought patterns. It is possible that the person may carry on conversations with someone who is not even present. While the behavior may appear somewhat bizarre to you and others, to the victim the voices are real. Speak calmly and do not shout commands or orders to a person in a mental crisis. Call for help immediately.