

PROCEED TO INTERACT AS YOU:

1. **BE CALM** and **GIVE FIRM, CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS**;
2. **ASSESS THE SITUATION** for safety;
3. **MAINTAIN ADEQUATE SPACE** between you and the person;
4. **RESPOND TO APPARENT FEELINGS**;
5. **RESPOND TO DELUSIONS AND HALLUCINATIONS** by talking about the person's feeling rather than what he is saying;
6. **BE HELPFUL, ENCOURAGING and SUPPORTIVE.**

AVOID:

1. **STARING** at the person, this may be interpreted as a threat;
2. **CONFUSING** the person;
3. **GIVING MULTIPLE CHOICES**, this increases confusion;
4. **WHISPERING, YELLING, RIDICULING, DECEIVING or TOUCHING**, this may cause more fear and lead to violence.

Someone with a psychiatric illness might...

So you need to...

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|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Have trouble with reality | → | Be simple, truthful |
| Be fearful | → | Stay Calm |
| Be insecure | → | Be accepting |
| Have trouble concentrating | → | Be brief, repeat |
| Be over stimulated | → | Limit input |
| Easily become agitated | → | Recognize agitation |
| Have poor judgment | → | Not expect rational discussion |
| Be preoccupied | → | Get attention first |
| Be withdrawn | → | Initiate relevant conversation |
| Have changing emotions | → | Disregard |
| Have changing plans | → | Keep to one plan |
| Have little empathy for you | → | Recognize as a symptom |
| Believe delusions | → | Ignore, don't argue |
| Have low self-esteem and motivation | → | Stay positive |

To: Illinois Law Enforcement Officers:

You probably come into contact with individuals in crisis all the time, but that likelihood may increase over the next several weeks if proposed cuts to Illinois human services are not quickly resolved.

Services that are slated for dramatic cuts include community-based services for individuals with mental illnesses. NAMI Illinois, the state office of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, would like to offer tips that may help everyone stay safe.

Please print this flyer and give it to officers to help them effectively deal with individuals in crisis. We want everyone to be safe during this stressful time.

If additional assistance is needed please call NAMI Illinois at 800-346-4572.

Here are key messages when delivering these cards to your officers:

1. Remember that a person with a mental illness is a person first. They are sick and in need of treatment.
2. Remain calm and helpful.
3. Assess the situation for safety.
4. Respond to the individuals basic needs.
5. Maintain space between you. Do not touch the individual unless necessary. For persons with mental illness this may frighten them and lead to violence.
6. Give simple, clear directions. If you are working as a team, one person should talk to avoid confusion.
7. If someone is experiencing delusions or hallucinations, respond to the individual's feelings, rather than content of their conversation.
8. Do not arrest a person for illness-related behavior that is not criminal in nature.

One in four adults experience a mental health disorder in a given year. One in 17 lives with a serious mental illness. They are common, treatable illnesses. Please help and support these folks. With treatment and support, recovery is not only possible, but probable.

Thank you...