

In a Mental Health Crisis?



What to Expect in Georgia

If you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health crisis, remember that 988 is a valuable resource you can turn to for immediate support. If the situation cannot be fully resolved over the phone, additional interventions and support services may be recommended as needed.

How to Support Someone in Crisis

- Listen empathetically, remain calm, and express support.
- Ask what they need and present options.
- Encourage reaching out to professionals.
- Help them connect to safe resources.

Immediate Steps in a Crisis

Call | Text | Chat 988:

- Confidential & Free: Conversations are private and cost nothing.
- Trained Counselor Support: Available 24/7, providing immediate emotional support and assessment.
- Resource Connection: Refer you to local behavioral health and community services.

For Medical Emergencies:

- If you or someone else is in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

Mobile Crisis Response in Georgia

Dispatch: If the situation requires, GCAL sends mobile crisis teams anywhere in the state (all 159 counties).

Who Responds: Trained mental health professionals.

What They Do:

- **On-Site Assessment**
 - Evaluate your safety and that of others.
- **Crisis De-escalation**
 - Engage with you to calm the situation and provide support.
- **Crisis Resolution**
 - Develop a safety plan, offer brief intervention, and start connections to supports.
- **Referral and Follow-up**
 - Link you to services (clinical, peer, ongoing community supports).
 - May conduct check-ins to support follow-through if available.
- **Alternatives to Police/Involuntary Treatment**
 - Avoids unnecessary emergency room visits or law enforcement involvement when possible.
 - If necessary, clinicians can arrange for higher levels of care.

Understanding Involuntary Treatment (Georgia Law)

Involuntary commitment, or civil commitment, in Georgia is a legal process that allows a person to be ordered into psychiatric treatment, even against their will. This is used in serious situations when a person is experiencing a severe mental health condition or addiction and needs care, but is unwilling or unable to seek it themselves:

- **Petition:** Two people who recently saw someone behaving unsafely can ask the court for a mental health evaluation.
- **Doctor's Request:** A doctor can request an emergency mental evaluation (1013 request) if they believe it is needed.
- **Police:** Law enforcement can take someone for evaluation (instead of arrest) if they think the person needs mental health treatment.

What Happens Next:

- If approved, the person is taken to a hospital for a mental health evaluation (up to 48 hours).
- If more treatment is needed, the person can stay up to 5 more days.
- Any longer or ongoing treatment must be ordered by the court and can be in a hospital or community setting.