*Here are some examples of situations or stressors that can trigger a*

*mental health crisis:*

**Home or Environmental Triggers**

Changes to family structure; parents separate, divorce or remarry

Loss of any kind, family member or friend due to death or relocation

Loss of family pet

Transitions between parents’ homes

Strained relationships with step-siblings / step-parents

Changes in friendships

Fights or arguments with siblings or friends

Conflict or arguments with parents/family

**School Triggers**

Worrying about tests and grades

Overwhelmed by homework or projects

Feeling singled out by peers or feelings of loneliness

Pressures at school, transitions between classes and school activities

Bullying at school

Pressure by peers

Suspensions, detentions or other discipline

Use of seclusion or restraints

Misunderstanding by teachers who may not understand that the

child’s behavior is a symptom of their mental illness.

**Other Triggers**

Stops taking medication or misses a few doses

Starts new medication / new dosage of current medication

Medication stops working

Use of drugs or alcohol

Pending court dates

Being in crowds / large groups of people

Changes in relationship with boyfriend, girlfriend, partner

**What are the warning signs of a mental health crisis?**

Sometimes families or caregivers observe changes in a child’s behavior that may indicate an impending crisis; other times the crisis occurs suddenly and without warning. You may be able to de-escalate or prevent a crisis from happening by identifying the early changes in your child’s behavior (unusual reactions to daily tasks; increases in stress levels, etc.). Families may want to keep a journal or calendar documenting what preceded the behaviors that are of concern.

*Here are some warning signs of a potential mental health crisis:*

**Inability to cope with daily tasks**

Doesn’t bathe, brush teeth, comb/brush hair

Refuses to eat or eats too much

Sleeps all day, refuses to get out of bed

Doesn’t sleep

**Rapid mood swings**

Increase in energy

Inability to stay still, pacing

Depressed mood

**Increased agitation**

Makes verbal threats

Violent out-of-control behavior

Destroys property

**Displays abusive behavior**

Hurting others

Hurting self (cutting, burning, etc.)

Alcohol or substance abuse

Cruelty to animals

**Loses touch with reality (psychosis)**

Unable to recognize family or friends

Confused thinking, strange ideas

Thinking they are someone they are not

Not understanding what people are saying

**Isolation from school, family, friends**

No or little interest in extra-curricular activities

Changes in friendships

Stops attending school, stops doing homework

**Unexplained physical symptoms**

Eyes or facial expressions look different

Increase in headaches, stomach aches

Complains they don’t feel well