

## Mobile Crisis Teams in New York City

### What is a Mobile Crisis Team?

A mobile crisis team is an interdisciplinary team of mental health professionals (e.g., nurses, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health technicians, addiction specialists, and peer counselors). Teams operate through agencies and municipal hospitals. They respond to people in the community, usually visiting them at home, although they can meet at other locations.

### What do Mobile Crisis Teams do?

Mobile crisis teams can provide mental health engagement, intervention, and follow-up support to help overcome resistance to treatment. Depending on what a person is willing to accept, the teams may offer a range of services, including:

- Assist individuals experiencing a crisis event to resolve the crisis when possible
- Provide an intervention in an environment where the individual experiencing the crisis is most comfortable and the intervention is least restrictive (e.g. often their home or other place in the community)
- Provide appropriate care/support while avoiding unnecessary law enforcement involvement, emergency department use, and hospitalization when possible
- Connect individuals in crisis to all necessary medical and behavioral health services that can help resolve the situation and prevent future crises

If a mobile crisis team determines that a person in crisis needs further psychiatric or medical assessment, they can transport that person to a hospital psychiatric emergency room. Mobile crisis teams may direct police or EMS to take a person to an emergency room against their will only if they have a mental illness (or the appearance of mental illness) and are considered to be a danger to themselves or others. This is in accordance with New York State Mental Hygiene Law.

If a person is transported to a psychiatric emergency room, it is up to the hospital to determine whether to admit them to a psychiatric inpatient unit. Mobile crisis teams have no decision-making power over whether a person is admitted to an inpatient unit. This decision is entirely in the hands of the hospital psychiatrists.

### What is the NYC Definition of Behavioral Health Crisis?

A person in New York City who is experiencing, or is at risk of, a behavioral health crisis is defined as non-life-threatening situation in which a person experiences an intense behavioral, emotional, or psychiatric response triggered by a precipitating event. The person may be at risk of harm to self or others, disoriented or out of touch

with reality, functionally compromised, or otherwise agitated and unable to be calmed. If this crisis is left untreated, it could result in an emergency.

### **What are the criteria for a visit by a Mobile Crisis Team?**

The person currently meets the NYC definition for a behavioral health crisis; AND the person is unwilling or unable to seek or adhere to behavioral health care on their own or with the aid of a family member, caregiver, or friend; OR the person requires short-term supports until behavioral health services are available.

### **How do I access a Mobile Crisis Team?**

To access a Mobile Crisis Team in New York City, you must first call the New York City 988 Crisis Lifeline. **Important note:** When you call 988, please ask if you are speaking with a NYC operator. In the majority of cases, you will be routed to a NYC agent if you are calling from one of the 5 boroughs but check to be sure, as sometimes your call will be routed to a nearby location when all NYC operators are busy. If the operator is outside of NYC, ask to be transferred or call back at a later time. This is because Mobile Crisis in NYC can only be accessed through NYC 988.

Once you are connected to a NYC 988 operator, you can request a Mobile Crisis team. The 988 operator will ask questions to ensure that you or your loved one is eligible to receive Mobile Crisis services. We highly recommend that you read through this [Mobile Crisis Frequently Asked Questions](#) document before calling 988 for services.

### **About NAMI-NYC**

At the National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City (NAMI-NYC), we assist thousands of families and individuals affected by mental illness annually through free education, support, and advocacy.

NAMI-NYC offers [mental health classes](#), [support and social groups](#), [family mentoring](#), and a [Helpline](#) with translation services in 180+ languages. Our support services are free regardless of income, insurance, or immigration status. Contact our Helpline M-F from 10am to 6pm and we'll connect you to NAMI-NYC services or provide you with community resources that can help you take the next step in your journey.

**Phone:** 212-684-3264

**Text:** 212-684-3264 (same as phone number)

**Chat with us through our website:** <https://naminycmetro.org/helpline/>