

PRINTABLE REFERENCE

Mental health admission checklist

Use this sheet to choose an urgent next step, explain what is happening, and bring key information if an ER or hospital intake is needed.

If someone may die or be seriously hurt now

Call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room. Say clearly: "This is a mental health emergency."

If someone feels unsafe, overwhelmed, or in distress

Call **988**, text **988**, or use **988 chat** for suicide, mental health, or substance use crisis support.

Choose the level of help**1****Immediate danger**

Someone may die, be seriously hurt, or cannot stay safe right now. Call **911** or go to the ER.

2**Crisis support**

Someone feels unsafe, overwhelmed, or in distress. Call **988** or text **988** to talk through the safest next step.

3**Evaluation needed**

Hospital-level care may be needed. Start with an ER, psychiatric intake line, mobile crisis team, or clinician.

4**Practical prep**

Once immediate safety is handled, gather key information, ask about the wait, and plan for insurance questions.

Bring or write down

- Photo ID, insurance card, and emergency contact names
- Diagnoses, prior hospital stays, suicide attempts, self-harm, violence risk, or trauma triggers
- Medical conditions, pregnancy status if relevant, mobility needs, glasses, contacts, and assistive devices
- Simple clothing without drawstrings, basic toiletries, reading material if allowed, and phone numbers on paper
- Current medications, doses, allergies, pharmacy, and recent medication changes
- Alcohol, drug, or withdrawal concerns, including last use and amount
- Secure weapons, extra medications, sharp objects, cords, and other safety risks at home
- Child, pet, work, school, rent, or bill coverage if time allows

Words to use**If checking yourself in**

"I am having a severe mental health crisis and I do not feel safe at home right now. I need to be evaluated for a psychiatric admission."

If helping someone else

"I am here with my loved one. They are in the middle of a mental health crisis and cannot keep themselves safe right now. They need an emergency evaluation."

Questions while waiting

- What is the next step, and who will evaluate safety?
- Am I checked in voluntarily, or am I on a temporary legal hold?
- What is the estimated wait for a psychiatric bed or next placement?
- Can I use my phone, or is there a unit phone for family updates?
- What personal items are allowed on the unit?

Insurance and cost, once safe

- Ask whether the ER, hospital, or psychiatric unit is in network.
- Ask whether inpatient mental health care needs authorization after emergency evaluation.
- If uninsured or underinsured, ask for financial assistance, Medicaid screening, and community mental health options.
- If a bill or denial arrives later, ask for an itemized bill and your insurance Explanation of Benefits.

Before leaving

- Get follow-up appointment dates, times, and phone numbers.
- Confirm prescriptions were sent or included in discharge paperwork.
- Retrieve keys, phone, ID, wallet, clothes, and stored belongings.
- Ask what to do if symptoms get worse after leaving.

This guide is general education, not medical or legal advice. Patient rights, emergency holds, insurance rules, privacy rules, and minor consent vary by state and hospital.

Full guide: [inpatientadmitguide.com](https://www.inpatientadmitguide.com)