

Mental health crisis care for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years: the CAMH-Crisis evidence synthesis

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Plain language summary

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Plain language summary

We wanted to know more about services for children and young people in mental health crisis. The aim was to investigate what research on this topic has already been completed, and we were specifically interested in what people think of crisis care, the goals of crisis services and whether or not crisis care is helpful. In our evidence synthesis, we included research and other documents (e.g. policies).

We used a systematic approach to find relevant research from January 1995 to January 2021 and worked with a Stakeholder Advisory Group (comprising people able to provide expertise through personal experience, practitioners and other researchers) whose members helped us locate relevant published material. The Stakeholder Advisory Group also helped us find important reports and websites. We used a clear process to decide whether or not to include each research paper found, reflecting the aim of our study, and whether or not the research had been completed to a good-enough standard.

We included 48 primary research articles, 36 descriptive accounts of different crisis services and 54 other types of documents. We categorised crisis services as being organised in the following ways: triage/assessment only, digitally mediated support approaches, and intervention approaches and models. When looking at experiences of crisis care, we found literature on the following topics: barriers to and facilitators of seeking and accessing appropriate support; what children and young people want from crisis services; children's, young people's and families' experiences of crisis services; and service provision. As the included studies were different in nature, we were unable to clearly determine what models of crisis care work. We found seven clear goals of crisis intervention, that is, crisis services (1) assess and plan care, (2) stabilise and manage the current crisis period, (3) keep children and young people in their home environment, (4) help children and young people and their families to engage with community treatment, (5) help children and young people and their families access additional mental health services, (6) help with access to peer support and (7) train and supervise other staff.

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