

# DOJ, Office of Children's Mental Health: Partner to Help Youth When in Crisis

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MADISON, Wis. – The Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH) and Attorney General Josh Kaul today announced the [Mental Health Crisis Card](#) – a valuable tool to help kids in a mental health crisis. "These cards will help children in crisis get the support they need quickly," said Attorney General Kaul. "Wisconsin DOJ's Office of School Safety is proud to be partnering with the Office of Children's Mental Health on this important resource."

"Tools like the mental health crisis card help individuals to be advocates for themselves even when they are in crisis and can help to de-escalate tense situations," said First Lady Kathy Evers, "Adding the school safety "Speak Up, Speak Out" tip line information makes it an even more comprehensive resource. Addressing the mental health needs of students in our state is a significant priority, and it is wonderful when state agencies collaborate on projects like this to make resources easily accessible."

The wallet-sized card tells people who are with a youth experiencing an agitated state or mental health crisis what to do immediately, in the first five minutes, to de-escalate the situation. Youth fill out their own card and list up to three calming strategies on the front of the card.

When needed, youth can show the card to people around them who can follow their calming instructions. Often when youth are in an agitated state they are unable to effectively communicate in the moment. The calming strategies on the card are their voice. Youth know what calms them better than anyone else and listening to their voice is important. When people follow calming strategies a young person has

identified, negative impacts can be reduced or eliminated.

The crisis situation can be avoided and youth will feel safe and understood. The back of the card also includes important resources for youth: National Suicide Hotline, HOPELINE text, and SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT – a free, 24/7 digital resource center and tip line created by the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of School Safety (OSS). Students, parents, school staff, or any community members can submit a school safety concern or threat via the [resource center website](#), mobile phone application, or toll-free number.

Resource center staff work around-the-clock to respond to tips and to deploy a response locally by communicating directly with school administrators, law enforcement, and counselors. The card was developed by the OCMH Access Team, which includes individuals with lived experience (parents of children with mental health challenges or youth with mental health challenges). The card was created in response to those with lived experience describing incidents where the youth experiencing an agitated state ended up escalating into a full mental health crisis and/or being restrained because of it.

The team created the card to introduce calming strategies for a responder to use in order to de-escalate the situation. The Mental Health Crisis Card is available to print on the [OCMH website](#). Youth, or adults, simply fill out the card, carry it with them and present the card when needed. People presented with the card should read the front of the card and assist the youth with the calming strategies specified on the card.

Example calming strategies are on the OCMH website. Additionally, SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT reports can be made 24/7: Online at [speakup.widoj.gov](#) 1-800-MY-SUSO-1 (1-800-697-8761) Mobile app ([iOS/Android](#))

Learn more about the SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT Resource Center at <https://speakup.widoj.gov/>.

For further information on the Mental Health Crisis Card contact Linda Hall, Director of the Office of Children's Mental Health at [linda.hall@wisconsin.gov](mailto:linda.hall@wisconsin.gov) or (608) 228-3895. [Informational Flyer Mental Health Crisis Card](#) Press release: <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/news-releases/doj-and-office-children%E2%80%99s-mental-health-partner-help-youth-when-crisis>