



# NARRAGANSETT INDIAN HEALTH CENTER

*Improving health in our community*

January 2, 2024

Dear Tribal Member,

The Narragansett Indian Health Center (NIHC) staff want to extend our deepest sympathy to family and friends who have lost a loved one. Those who suffer loss are touched by our relationships, as we struggle with meaning from the loss. The NIHC Team is sharing the following information, on behalf of the Tribal Government and health center in the hopes that it may be of some help when you experience a loss:

## Grief and Loss of a Loved One

The most readily accessible resource is the Office of Behavioral Health Program in place at NIHC. The therapist here is Craig Gaspard, LICSW. He is available for telehealth or phone-only appointments from Tuesday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 (until 5 pm on Tuesdays). Craig can be reached @ 401-364-1263 extension 122. Please leave a voicemail message and he will get back to you as soon as he is able.

Also, many funeral homes do provide support groups for those of loved ones who lost a family member or friend. Another resource we want to make you aware of is Hope Health. Their on-line presence is at [www.hopehealthco.org/services/hospice-care/grief-support/find-a-grief-support-group/](http://www.hopehealthco.org/services/hospice-care/grief-support/find-a-grief-support-group/) They have both in-person and remote groups and even use animals such as horses as part of their therapeutic services.

Finally, because of the importance of extended family in nearly all Native American traditions and cultures, it is important to ask and include all of those touched by the loss of a loved one - from our young to our elders. You can help support our Elders by phone call and with offers as simple as transportation. Our young can often be exposed to grief and loss but need closer support and explanations for the loss in ways that are easily understood, depending on their age and level of maturity.

NIHC behavioral health staff has accessed resources on the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center that explain "normal" types of grief and those that are abnormal where help, possibly from a trained therapist, may be of assistance. There is cultural context here for some tribal members, as well.

In any event, PLEASE talk to others and don't ignore the pain of loss. Feeling loss, sadness, emptiness, and other signs of grief are the START of healing.

The flyer on the following page offers other resources that are available and may be of help to you, in the event of crisis situations.

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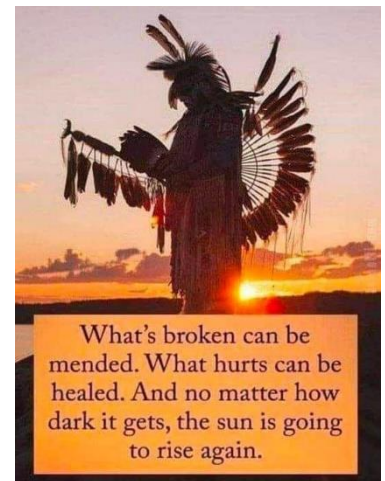
51 Old Mill Road, Charlestown, RI 02813

NIHC Administration Tel. 401.364.1263 x 127 or 125 / NIHC Administration Fax 401.364.6427  
NIHC MEDICAL CLINIC TEL. 401.364.1263 x 107 / NIHC MEDICAL CLINIC FAX 401.364.1030

## NIHC is here to help you in a time of crisis.

Crisis can be defined as one's perception or experience of an event or situation as an intolerable difficulty that overwhelms a person's resources and coping mechanisms.

- A crisis can refer to any situation in which an individual perceives danger or a sudden loss of one's ability to use helpful problem-solving and coping skills.
- A number of events or circumstances can be considered a crisis: life-threatening situations, such as natural disasters (such as a hurricane), sexual assault or other criminal victimization; medical illness; mental illness; thoughts of suicide or homicide; and loss or drastic changes in relationships (death of a loved one or divorce, for example).
- Crisis intervention is the urgent and temporary care given to someone in order to interrupt the downward spiral of deconstructive behavior and return an individual to their usual level of pre-crisis functioning.
- Crisis intervention also refers to the methods used to offer immediate, short-term help to individuals who experience an event that produces emotional, mental, physical, and behavioral distress or problems.



## Crisis Appointment

NIHC recommends you call us or another provider for a crisis appointment under the following circumstances:

1. Recent or current thoughts of harming yourself
2. Recent or current thoughts of harming someone else
3. Recent trauma (e.g., physical or sexual assault, emotional or spiritual trauma)
4. Hearing or seeing things that others do not

**While these are examples of reasons for an urgent counseling appointment, you may define your own crisis.**

1. If it is **during business hours** and you are in crisis, please call our direct line at **401.364.1263 ext. 107** and ask to speak with our Counselor, Craig Gaspard, to make an urgent care appointment.
  - Urgent care appointments are available Tuesday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
  - Please let front desk staff know you need to be seen the same day.

2. If it is **after NIHC business hours** and you've reached the NIHC's answering service, and you would like to speak to a Counselor immediately, please call South Shore Mental Health Center / Gateway Health Care's 24/7 line at 401.364.7705 ext. 2 or follow the prompts for crisis support at **any time** to speak to a clinician immediately.
3. If you would like to speak to a clinician immediately, you can **call or text** "Hello" to the National Support Line at **988**. <https://988lifeline.org>
4. If this is an immediate/life-threatening emergency, please call **911** or go to the nearest emergency room or urgent care.

## Other Crisis Hotlines

- National Domestic Violence Hotline. Hours: 24/7. **800-799-7233**  
**SMS:** Text START to 88788. The National Domestic Violence Hotline Official Website is: <https://www.thehotline.org>
- Family Service of Rhode Island Crisis Line: **(401) 519-2280** Phone: **401-331-1350** [www.familyserviceri.org](http://www.familyserviceri.org)
- Day One offers immediate crisis intervention and advocacy. 24-hour helpline: **1 (800) 494-8100** Phone: **401-421-4100** [www.dayoneri.org](http://www.dayoneri.org)
- National Suicide Hotline: **800-784-2433** or **800-273-8255**
- Trans Lifeline: **877-565-8860**

## *Purpose of Crisis Intervention*

Crisis intervention has several purposes. It aims to:

- Reduce the intensity of an individual's emotional, mental, physical and behavioral reactions to a crisis.
- Help individuals return to their level of functioning before the crisis.
- Improve functioning above and beyond this by developing new coping skills and eliminating ineffective ways of coping, such as withdrawal, isolation, and substance abuse.
- Assist individuals in coping with future difficulties more effectively.

Crisis intervention aims to assist an individual in recovering from the crisis and to prevent serious long-term problems from developing by talking about what happened and the feelings about the situation, while developing ways to cope and solve problems.

## Quick Coping Strategies

### *Mindfulness and Meditation*

Research has shown mindfulness to be effective against anxiety and depression. It can help reduce stress and helps the mind focus on the present moment without criticism or judgment.

### *Grounding with the Five Senses*

Grounding is a quick and effective way to reduce the intensity of emotions. Use the five senses to soothe, comfort, and reset.

Try this exercise to identify:

- 5 things that you see
- 4 things that you touch
- 3 things you hear
- 2 things you smell or like to smell
- 1 thing you taste (alternatively, you can identify 1 thing you like about yourself if tasting is not readily available)

### *Breathing Exercises*

When we become stressed, we tend to breathe shallowly from our chest. Deep breathing from your belly increases the oxygen in your body, to your brain, and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes a state of physical and emotional calmness.

Try this exercise:

- Inhale deep and slowly for 5 seconds
- Exhale completely for 5 seconds
- Repeat as many times as you need
- You may use the [breathing bubble video at the link below](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaQed_Xdyvw) to help you count your breaths [youtube.com/watch?v=iaQed\\_Xdyvw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaQed_Xdyvw)

