

Struggling With Your Mental Health? Help is Available in New Bedford

There's help for your mental health, and it's way easier than you think.

Whether you're in a mental health crisis, just need someone to talk to or know someone who is struggling with mental health, there's a team ready to help.

Right here in New Bedford is the **24/7 Emergency Services Program (ESP)**, run by Child & Family Services at 543 North Street, just north of Buttonwood Park.

All you have to do is call 508-996-3154 at any hour of any day of the year to start a journey toward better mental health.

You probably have questions. Let's answer some of the most common.

Q: Do I need to be in a crisis?

A: No. You can call any time, for anything. Yes, Child & Family Services ESP helps those in a mental health crisis. But you do NOT need to be in a crisis to see them. Do not be afraid to call even if it's just to talk and process your emotions. The team is here to listen, be your outlet and intervene before you reach a state of distress, whenever possible.

Q: Do I need insurance?

A: No. The priority is you. You do not need insurance to call or visit ESP, so don't let that be a reason not to call. Pick up the phone and let them take care of the rest.

Q: Do I need reliable transportation? Do I need to come to your offices?

A: *No. Don't worry about transportation.* The Mobile Crisis Intervention (MCI) program allows members of the ESP team to meet you where it is safest, whether that's at your home, or somewhere in the community. If you prefer to visit at the offices, Child & Family Services offers transportation from 18 cities and towns from New Bedford to Plymouth.

Q: When are you closed?

A: Never. No time is a bad time. The phone lines and building are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, including holidays and weekends. You can call/visit any time of the day or night. The team is here to listen.

Q: Should I visit an emergency room first?

A: If you are in a medical emergency: Yes. If you are not, let ESP help you first, because the ER brings longer wait times and the possibility of large medical bills. And more likely than not, the ER will simply refer you back to ESP anyway. So skip that step, let ESP intervene and consider all your options, starting with the least restrictive level of care.

So if you or someone you know is stressed, depressed or struggling with mental health or substance use, please call the team at 508-996-3154. Child & Family Services' ESP offers 24/7 services for people of all ages in need of mental health counseling and/or evaluation.

