

IN A CRISIS

IF THERE IS A THREAT OF ASSAULT

- DON'T underestimate the risk – People who are acutely psychotic, especially if also delusional and abusing alcohol or street drugs, are not predictable and are capable of extreme violence.
- DISCUSS the situation with the case manager, social worker and/or psychiatrist if such a professional is already involved – Make sure they are aware of the person's threatening or assaultive behavior. If possible, put your concerns in writing to them and cc the message to others in a position of responsibility. Written notification is much more difficult to ignore.
- SAFE-PROOF your home. Have a room to which you can retreat and be safe if needed. It should have a secure lock and a telephone. Do not allow firearms in the house.
- CLEARLY SPELL OUT the consequences for the person if he/she becomes assaultive (e.g., may no longer live at home) – Be prepared to carry out these consequences.
- MINIMIZE alcohol or street drug use in whatever ways are possible – Substance abuse is often a trigger for assaultive behavior.
- IF threatened by someone with manic-depressive illness (bipolar disorder) – Remain calm, keep conversation to a minimum and exit the situation.
- IF threatened by someone with schizophrenia – Remain calm, remain physically distant (give the person lots of space), avoid direct eye contact, sympathize and try to find something on which you both agree.
- DO NOT ALLOW yourself to become trapped – Always remain physically between the person and the open door.
- **DO NOT HESITATE to call the police if you are threatened or alarmed.**

Print a copy of this list to keep with your list of essential telephone numbers.

