

P-CAST Frequently Asked Questions

What is a psychiatric crisis?

A psychiatric crisis is a situation in which a person's thoughts, feelings, or behaviors may lead them to hurt themselves or others, or put them at risk of being unable to care for themselves or function in a healthy manner.

Who is eligible to receive P-CAST services?

P-CAST was created to support the SDSU campus community, which includes students, staff, faculty, and SDSU community members.

What type of situations does P-CAST respond to?

P-CAST can respond to any psychiatric crisis that does not involve an imminent safety risk. Possible situations include: suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation, psychosis, substance-induced psychosis, recent sexual assault, sudden death of a loved one, welfare checks. Situations P-CAST can *not* respond to: any situation involving a weapon/ violence, domestic violence, medical emergencies, individuals who are unhoused but are not experiencing a psychiatric crisis.

What is a co-responder model?

Though co-responder models vary, they typically involve law enforcement and mental health clinicians working together to respond to calls involving a psychiatric crisis.

How do I contact P-CAST?

Individuals can contact P-CAST by calling the SDSU Police Department Dispatch, 911. Dispatch will ask a series of questions to assess for risk and safety, and then deploy P-CAST if appropriate.

Who provides P-CAST services?

Services are provided by trained mental health clinicians in collaboration with UPD.

What is P-CAST's response time?

Response times vary based on availability of clinicians and law enforcement, and calls are prioritized depending on urgency.

What can I expect from P-CAST when they arrive?

Our clinicians will speak with the individual and perform a rapid assessment to determine the best course of action. Our services are designed to be empathic, person-centered, and collaborative.

What does P-CAST do to support students after a psychiatric crisis?

P-CAST provides a continuum of care that extends beyond the crisis phase. Our clinicians will support students to help them get back on track academically by connecting students to resources and providing mental health treatment and follow-up services.

Can I call P-CAST for myself?

Yes; callers can request help for themselves or someone else. P-CAST is designed to support anyone in the SDSU community who meets criteria. Dispatch will ask a series of questions to assess for risk and safety, and then deploy P-CAST if appropriate.

What days/ times is P-CAST available?

P-CAST's operating hours are Monday- Friday, 8:00am- 4:30pm; our hours will be extended in the fall.

Who do I call if P-CAST isn't available?

Individuals can request assistance from UPD by calling 911. You can also call the San Diego Access and Crisis Line at 1-888-724-7240.

How does P-CAST collaborate with the University Police Department and Counseling & Psychological Services?

Our clinicians are employees of Counseling & Psychological Services and embedded within the SDSU Police Department. Our clinicians consult and collaborate with C&PS and UPD, while maintaining confidentiality and respecting a student's right to privacy.

If I called P-CAST to assist someone, what should I do while I wait with them?

If possible, wait with the individual in a private space until P-CAST arrives. Consider asking the individual if there's anything you can do to be supportive, such as calling a family member or friend. Assisting someone during a psychiatric crisis can be stressful; however, try your best to remain calm, empathic, and supportive. If the individual you are waiting with decides to leave, do not attempt to follow or restrain them.

If someone needs to be hospitalized, how are they transported?

UPD and MCRT are able to transport individuals to the hospital or ED. Individuals who agree to voluntarily go to the hospital may also be transported by a family member or friend if that is their preference.

What happens if someone needs to be hospitalized but declines to go?

When an individual needs to be hospitalized because they are a danger to themselves or others, our goal is to work with the individual so they go to the hospital voluntarily. Because the safety of the SDSU community is our number one priority, if an individual is a danger to themselves or others and declines to go to the hospital, UPD will be required to detain the individual in order to safely transport them to a hospital.

Does P-CAST provide postvention services?

Yes. If students are impacted by a tragic event or potentially unsettling experience, our team can meet with students to provide support, promote healing, and help students connect with any necessary resources.

Can I call P-CAST about a homeless individual on campus?

P-CAST will respond to anyone in the SDSU community who is experiencing a psychiatric crisis; however, we will not respond to individuals who are unhoused but not experiencing a psychiatric crisis.

Is there a cost for utilizing P-CAST services? Will I receive a bill afterwards?

There is no cost for utilizing P-CAST as it is funded by SDSU Counseling & Psychological Services. If a student requires hospitalization, the student may incur costs from the hospital or crisis stabilization unit. If a student has financial concerns after being discharged from the hospital, P-CAST can help students connect with supportive resources such as the Economic Crisis & Response Team (ECRT), the Health Literacy & Outreach Coordinator, etc.