



## Top Reasons for a Mental Health Hold

**Disclaimer:** This document is for informational and advocacy purposes only. It is not legal or medical advice. Laws vary by state and individual circumstances. Always consult with a licensed professional for decisions regarding involuntary mental health holds. This list is not exhaustive. These are commonly cited reasons, but each case is unique and evaluated based on the situation, symptoms, and applicable state law.

### I. Immediate Risk to Self or Others

Expressing suicidal thoughts or making a suicide attempt

Stating a plan to harm someone else or engaging in violent behavior

Owning or accessing weapons while in a manic, paranoid, or psychotic state

### II. Inability to Care for Oneself (Grave Disability)

Not eating, drinking, or taking essential medications

Wandering into dangerous environments confused or disoriented

Neglecting basic hygiene or refusing medical treatment due to mental illness

### III. Psychosis or Severe Psychiatric Symptoms

Hearing voices, seeing things, or experiencing delusions

Grandiose, religious, or paranoid beliefs leading to unsafe behavior

Speaking in a way that's incoherent, disorganized, or disconnected from reality

### IV. Substance-Related Mental Health Crises

Overdosing or repeatedly putting oneself in danger while using substances

Experiencing drug-induced psychosis or hallucinations

Withdrawing from substances in a way that becomes life-threatening

### V. Emotional and Situational Triggers

Postpartum psychosis or extreme perinatal distress  
Decompensation after trauma, breakup, or death  
Passive suicidal ideation (e.g., 'I wish I wouldn't wake up')

## **VI. Public Safety & Legal Factors**

Erratic or disruptive behavior in public places  
Homelessness caused by untreated mental illness  
Being detained repeatedly by police due to confusion or instability

## **VII. Court or Provider-Initiated Holds**

Ordered for competency evaluations or court-monitored treatment  
Violation of mental health treatment conditions or conservatorship  
Family or provider petitions for emergency psychiatric evaluation

## **VIII. Elderly or Cognitively Impaired**

Wandering or aggression due to dementia or Alzheimer's  
Unsafe behavior caused by confusion or memory loss