



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