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Though my child was diagnosed with anxiety and depression in 2017 and referred to Therapy by the primary care provider, we were unable to get appointment even for intake /initial assessment since the condition was not acute/AUTISM/ADHD (according to person at appointment desk) and there were not enough providers for office visits and with no -tele visit options. We painfully watched him deteriorate (academic, social and self-care metrics) and the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown hit him hard. He had a mental health crisis in November 2023 and as a parent I was frantic in getting him in- to therapy. The insurance website was not helpful with finding the therapist . Through the mutual friend's help, I called "Backpack" program, and the customer service representative was so considerate and helped us get into the therapy session the same week through tele-visit. I cannot imagine what could have happened without that appointment except ending up in emergency room and admitted in Psychiatric unit. It has been more than a month with weekly sessions, and I could see a slight ray of light of breakthrough in his life.

As a parent, I plead the authorities at decision and policy levels to make mental/behavioral health services available, accessible and affordable similar to somatic health services where not only young children but also the adolescents and adults get the needed help to work through their psychological and behavioral roadblocks and triggers for optimal functional level. Tele -mental health service is an excellent much needed alternative that could be added to all health services to restore optimum function and harmony in individual's life. Similar to school health and college on- campus health services for physical ailments, these organization to have a qualified psychologists who could conduct quick assessment /de-escalate /mitigate the emergency in a safe and secured place while connecting them to Tele-mental health services and following them through for achieving stability and preventing suspension/disenrollment/dropping-out of the education.