OBJECTIVE: Evaluation of a psychiatric emergency service in Munich that was implemented in spring 2000. METHOD: Socio-demographic and clinical data as well as the working relationship between patients and psychiatrists were documented. 92 psychiatrists rated 137 crisis consultations. 58 patients were able to answer a questionnaire in the acute crisis situation. RESULTS: The largest diagnostic group consists of patients with affective disorders, followed by patients with neurotic, stress, and somatoform disorders. The results indicate an overall high satisfaction of patients and psychiatrists concerning the efficacy of the crisis consultations. As to be expected from psychotherapy research, socio-demographical factors are hardly of any consequence, whereas relationship-based factors have a considerable influence. CONCLUSIONS: Directivity and giving structure on the psychiatrist's part can clearly enhance the patient's confidence.