



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**The Lifeline:  
With Help Comes Hope**

- National toll-free:  
800-273-TALK
- Call from anywhere in USA
- 24-7 coverage
- Free and confidential
- Federally funded



---

---

---

---

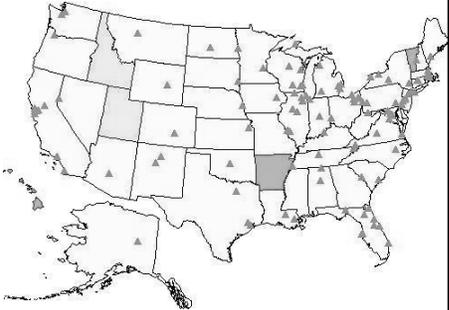
---

---

---

---

**1-800-273-TALK**

A map of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, is shown. Small triangles are placed across various states to indicate the locations of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's crisis centers. The triangles are distributed across all major regions of the country.

---

---

---

---

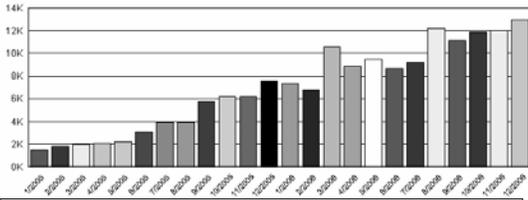
---

---

---

---

## Call Volume



January 2004: ~1,800 calls  
 December 2006: ~13,000 calls

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## How the Lifeline Works

- Caller dials **800-273-TALK**
- Call is routed to nearest crisis center (based on area code)
- Currently 120 centers & counting
- The crisis worker will:
  - Listen
  - Assess
  - Link and/or refer to services as needed (including EMS)
- Back-up centers to assure all calls answered

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What Hotlines Provide

- **24-7 ACCESS** to a trained counselor (anytime/anywhere, toll-free)
- **ANONYMITY** – allow callers to avoid stigma around help seeking
- **I & R** before a suicidal crisis occurs
- **LINKAGE** to emergency services for individuals that might not dial 911 themselves
- **EDUCATION/TRAINING** within local communities

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Do hotlines prevent suicide?**  
*Evidence from published studies*

- **Ecological studies from US & Canada:** Inconsistent findings – minimal effect, insignificant effect, effect only on subpopulation (Bridge et al. 1977; Leenars & Lester 2004; Lester, 1991, Lester, 1997; Miller, 1984)
- **Longitudinal Naturalistic Studies:** Elderly phone service in Italy significantly decreased suicide among elderly women - 6 times lower than general population. (De Leo et al., 1995, 2002)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Do hotlines prevent suicide?**  
*Evidence from published studies*

- **Program Evaluation (Australia):** Study of impact of telephone counseling on adolescents found significant decreases in suicidality and significant improvement in mental state during the course of telephone counseling sessions (King et al., 2003)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Do hotlines prevent suicide?**  
*Evidence from unpublished studies*

**Silent monitoring of 2,611 calls to 14 centers within a national hotline network finds:**

- People in need call the number
- People appear to be helped during significant # of calls
- Specific helper qualities/styles/behaviors related to better outcomes
- Helpers don't consistently assess suicide risk
- Center directors' descriptions of what staff does has no relationship to their actual behaviors
- Centers vary greatly in nature and quality of telephone help

*Source: Mishara et al. (2005)*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Do hotlines prevent suicide?**  
*Evidence from unpublished studies*

**Evaluation of 1,613 crisis callers and 1,081 suicidal callers to 8 U.S. centers during call and 3 weeks later finds:**

- Crisis hotlines are reaching seriously suicidal callers
- Emotional distress and suicidality decreased during and after calls
- 11.6% suicidal callers in follow-up spontaneously report that "call saved his/her life"
- Suicide risk assessments are not consistently performed and suicidality of callers is sometimes missed

*Source: Gould & Kalafat (2005)*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Working with a Hotline**  
*Practical Information*

- If your **campus operates a hotline** part-time, contract with a local center to serve as back-up
  - Formal agreement with compensation
  - Ensure campus services are in center's DB
- If **campus does not run hotline**, reach out to a local hotline, if available
  - Ensure campus services are in center's DB
- If there are **no local hotline services** in your area, contact NSPL, we'll put you in contact with the center answering in your area
  - Ensure campus services are in center's DB

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Impact of Research on NSPL Practice**

- Lifeline Subcommittee formed to help translate research into practice
  - Subcommittee includes Mishara, Gould and Kalafat, along with other researchers and experts in suicide prevention training, crisis center practice
- Establish national network minimum standards for crisis center practice (e.g. suicidality risk assessment, emergency rescue, etc.)
- Develop research informed trainings to support standards and make freely available to network crisis centers

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Summary

- Research suggests crisis hotlines:
  - Can effectively reach persons at risk of suicide
  - Have potential for preventing suicide
- Hotlines provide
  - 24-hour service
  - Anonymity
  - Linkage to emergency rescue
  - I & R
- Practice standards & training needed to help centers reach full prevention potential
- Evaluation of impact of new NSPL standards & training will be critical to ongoing quality improvements

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Contact Information

**Lidia Bernik, MHS**  
*Network Development Coordinator*  
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
(212) 614-5776  
**[lbernik@mhaofnyc.org](mailto:lbernik@mhaofnyc.org)**  
**[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---