

Performance Indicators for a Crisis Hotline

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Wow them with your story – get the credit deserved for a job well done!

It is essential in these economic times to be able to quantify and qualify program offerings and outcomes for Boards, internal and external stakeholder groups, and especially for potential funding sources. Most hotlines are typically evaluated by the number of calls they take, the hours of operation or other non-deductive kinds of data. However, the real value of a hotline services is seen in the content and interaction of each call. To not only be able to capture data on the fact that the call occurred but to also gather data regarding what occurred within that call and what was the outcome of the call provides an entirely different dimension to the audience.

These two types of data are output measures and outcome measures. Outputs speak to the number of units served; outcomes speak to the content, results, benefits of providing the unit. Here is a picture of what these two types of data can provide:

Output: the hotline received 25,000 calls last year, the calls were on average 3 minutes in length; 90% of the calls were answered by the third ring; 29,000 referrals to resources were made.

This sounds reasonable with some impressive numbers. To the “audience” it might seem that they received relevant and telling data. But they really did not. What does the number of calls really tell us? Does it state that the hotline is doing a good job? If their call volume went up next year to 45,000 would that tell us that the hotline did a good job; a bad job; or that the marketing was better?

Outcome: the hotline received 25,000 calls last year with the outcome results of:

^{3/4}
78% calls resulted in the report of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities thereby sparking an investigation

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82% calls received relevant education and training regarding abuse or neglect

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67% calls resulted in clearly identifying and verbalizing their issues/concerns regarding abuse or neglect and identifying what their next steps need to be to promote progress towards healthy behaviors

56% calls received training in skills and behaviors to modify damaging and abusive behavior before it gets out of control

^{3/4}
100% calls received referrals to effective and local services/resources to assist in addressing the issues regarding the call

But how does a hotline gather and report such data that is meaningful and provides the "wow" factor---“wow, I didn’t know they accomplished all of that”? This workshop will review some data gathering elements that can result in Performance Reporting that will give a Board or key stakeholder groups a very good overview of what the hotline actually accomplishes with each caller.