

## Retention of Volunteers on Distress Lines

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Volunteers need to be motivated to stay with an organisation as long as possible. Telephone Distress Lines often do not provide an experience that will effectively retain volunteers. The work of the organisation may not by itself satisfy many of the volunteers' needs and the management of the organisation may not be sufficiently engaged in possible compensating practices that would improve retention.

The presenters will outline the background of the problem of retention of volunteers, and the known needs of volunteers that may not be satisfied in various situations. The presenters will describe practices that have been found to be effective in various circumstances, with a particular focus on volunteers serving on distress lines.

The workshop content will include

- the value of volunteers
- volunteer motivational needs and expectations
- working conditions of distress line volunteers
- gaps between expectations, needs, and actual experiences
- practices to close the gaps, including
  - o training, debriefing, sharing
  - o social activities,
  - o recognitions and rewards
  - o removing or counteracting negative factors
- support by professionals

This workshop will provide to attendees an understanding of the motivational needs of volunteers and an outline of effective retention strategies based on the experience of the presenters and facilitators. There will be an active sharing of information and experiences between attendees.