



Families in Crisis

The 24-Hour Crisis Line receives calls every day from parents in distress trying to get help for their children. Parents call needing information on a parent's support group or how to help their young child who is hearing voices. Sometimes a parent will call just to vent his or her feelings of anger, guilt, frustration, worry or sadness. A parent may readily identify a child's physical needs such as food, clothing, rest or physical activity, but recognizing a child's mental and emotional needs may not be as obvious. The social stigma associated with mental illness may prevent parents from recognizing their child needs mental health care.

Among Washington State 6th graders, 23% reported feeling "so hopeless or sad almost every day for two weeks or more that they stopped their usual activities." For 8th, 10th and 12th graders, it increased to 33%. And girls are at greater risk; by 10th grade, 41% of girls reported depression.¹ Untreated depression is a leading cause of suicide and nationally more than 10 million teens suffer from depression. Only 21% of children who need mental health care actually receive help.² Suicide is the second leading cause of youth death in Washington State with more than two teens a week completing suicide.³

Parents may be frustrated by a lack of support or knowledge from health or mental health care professionals when they do seek help. A recent King County study on children with developmental disabilities indicated that parents felt frustrated that their doctors lacked information on children with disabilities and available services.⁴ Additionally, there are more children being diagnosed with mental illness, while there are fewer doctors who are willing to prescribe antidepressants because of new concerns about the side effects on children. Adding to the frustration of parents is the fact that children 13 years or older can legally refuse mental health services. In these cases, we can provide a parent with information about how they can initiate legal action, such as an at-risk youth petition, to get their child appropriate help.

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2-1-1 Now Available



After more than five years of planning, we are proud to report that you can now reach the Community Information Line by dialing 2-1-1 on your landline phone. Our existing local and toll-free phone numbers remain active so you can also reach us from your cell phone.

We are still working with cell phone carriers and hope to have cell phone service later this year.

We launched 2-1-1 on February 22 and, in the month of March, we handled over 8,600 calls; a 35% increase over March 2005! Clear Channel radio, with six stations in our area, aired over 600 public service announcements that helped to publicize 2-1-1. We also have a great fact sheet you can download from our website at www.crisisclinic.org. Please help us publicize 2-1-1 by printing this information and posting it at your office, community center or house of worship.

Our 2-1-1 Community Information Line is now open seven days a week from 8AM to 8PM to better meet the needs of our callers.

There's more Good News.....The legislature just granted \$2.5 million to make 2-1-1 operational statewide, so later this year every Washington resident will have 2-1-1 service and our King County 2-1-1 service will be 24/7/365. Remember, it's an easily-remembered number to "Get Help" or "Give Help."

Teen Link Celebrates 10 Years of Service

Human service programs are not easily maintained today. Crisis Clinic's Teen Link program is no exception. When it started in 1996, it was funded solely by grants from foundations and corporations without sustaining support. By 2000, expenses were \$60,000, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to secure grants year after year despite the obvious need in the community.

By 2000, Teen Link received its first sustained funding from United Way of King County followed by local municipalities who recognized the need for a crisis line for youth.

Teen Link has grown from occupying a small corner in the 24-Hour Crisis Line phone room to having its own logo, Web page, and Advisory Board composed of youth volunteers - all to ensure that Teen Link is not just "for teens," but also "by teens."

In the last 10 years, Teen Link has responded to more than 10,000 calls, distributed more than 125,000

resource guides, trained more than 40,000 youth and 3,000 adults in youth suicide prevention, and is still going strong!

To commemorate its 10-year anniversary, volunteers, staff and supporters came together for a celebration held on April 21, which raised more than \$7,000 for Teen Link.

The evening was an opportunity for celebration. The room was filled with hugs, smiles and the laughter of friends reconnecting. It was also filled with heartwarming moments as speakers shared what Teen Link has meant to them.

Make no mistake - this helpline is serious business. Teen Link is in the business of empowering youth - supporting and teaching them to make healthy choices in the face of adversity. Teen Link is about hearing the silenced voice of a youth when he feels he has nowhere else to turn; it is the 13-year-old girl who is failing her classes and fears telling her parents how bad things have become, and the 17-year-old boy who feels so alone that suicide has become an option. Teen Link is there for them.

There is a Buddhist saying that states, "Just by listening deeply we alleviate pain and suffering." If there was ever a phrase that summed up what Teen Link does - this is it! Here's to Teen Link!

Daemond Arrindell,
Youth Services Manager

Call (866) TEENLINK
6pm-10pm Daily



Families, *continued*

Parents not only have questions about their child's behavior, but also may be upset about their own feelings. Our phone workers allow parents to talk about their feelings of frustration, anger and sorrow. They convey empathy and caring so parents know they are not alone. We provide encouragement and information about community resources to help them.

Because our phone workers are directly supervised by a Crisis Supervisor who is a Mental Health Professional, we can assess when immediate help is needed and arrange for the YMCA's Children's Crisis Outreach Response Service to go to the family's home the same day, if necessary, to provide immediate help. The team works with the family to develop a service plan for their unique situation and arranges for additional services. This is a new program available for families whose child is not already connected to a publicly funded mental health agency. We also have information about

therapists in private practice who offer a sliding fee scale, as well as many other community services.

If you're concerned about your child's behavior or emotional state, consult with his or her teacher, guidance counselor or call the 24-Hour Crisis Line. If you know a teen who is troubled, let him/her know you care and give him/her the Teen Link help line phone number, a crisis line answered by trained teen volunteers. Early identification and treatment can help children with mental health problems reach their full potential and keep families together.

Shauna Cheney, MSW
Crisis Line Supervisor

¹ Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors (2001)

² <http://www.metrokc.gov/dchs/mhd/mhm/childrenfacts.htm>

³ Washington State Department of Health study (2004)

⁴ Report on the Early Intervention (Birth to Three) Services Focus Groups, King County Developmental Disabilities Division (2006)

Recognizing Signs of Suicide

At Crisis Clinic one of our primary goals is suicide prevention. We believe in empowering those who are considering suicide by helping them choose life and find other ways to deal with their pain.

If you believe a friend or loved one may be feeling suicidal, take it seriously.

The following are some “warning signs” of suicide:

- Hopelessness/Helplessness
- Panic/Anxiety
- Feelings of guilt and/or shame
- Depression
- Moodiness
- Irritability/Anger
- Increased crying
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Talking about suicide, making a plan or preoccupation with death
- Giving prized possessions away
- Change in weight/appetite
- Increase or decrease in sleep
- Dangerous or impulsive behavior
- Increased drug or alcohol abuse
- Withdrawal from family/friends, isolating
- Preparation for death (i.e. setting one’s affairs in order)
- Loss of interest in things that one normally cares about

The number one precursor of suicide is loss.
Loss of loved ones (death or separation)
Loss of job
Loss of health
Loss of children
Financial loss

If you think a person is possibly considering suicide, call the 24-Hour Crisis Line for assistance with assessment & intervention (866-4CRISIS).

Note: The diagnosis and treatment of depression and other psychiatric disorders requires trained medical professionals. The information provided is to be used for educational purposes only. It should NOT be used as a substitute for seeking professional care for the diagnosis and treatment of any mental/psychiatric disorders.

Updates

Thanks to a grant from the Mental Wellness Foundation, Teen Link had interior bus signs on 359 Metro buses in September and October, and again this April and May. Matching signs were posted in schools and we had ads in *The Stranger*. These ads helped to increase the number of calls to the Teen Link help line and many teens said they thought the ads were very effective.

Thanks also to the OneFamily, Nesholm and McEachern Foundations, and Q13/WB22 Cares Fund who provided generous support for Teen Link.

The Boeing Company is printing our 2006-07 *Where To Turn for Teens* resource guides.

The Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation made a very generous grant to support Crisis Clinic’s homelessness and housing efforts as a part of our 2-1-1 expansion.

Welcome to new trustees *Katie Heinrich*, The Medina Foundation; *Joelle Nole*, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; and *Maggie Pheasant*, consultant, who recently joined Crisis Clinic’s Board.

We also said goodbye and thank you to trustees *Michael Brown*, *David Chamberlain*, *John Arthur Wilson*, *Lance Blair* and *Sara Levin*. We are currently recruiting new trustees so check our website for the skills and competencies we are looking for and let us know if you are interested.

Crisis Clinic Trainings

We can provide these trainings:

- When Caring Becomes Caregiving
- Dealing with Difficult People
- Suicide Assessment & Intervention
- Critical Incident Stress Debriefings
- Aftermath of Trauma
- Crisis Line Volunteer Training
- Youth Suicide Prevention Training

For more information on any of these services, call our business office at 206.461.3210.

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Survivors of Suicide Support Group

First and third Monday of each month at 6:30PM

This professionally facilitated support group is for family and friends who have lost a loved one to suicide. It offers the opportunity to share feelings, experience grief and begin the healing process in a safe setting with others who have suffered the loss of a loved one to suicide. For more information, call the 24-Hour Crisis Line at 206.461.3222.

Volunteer Opportunities

The 24-Hour Crisis Line and Teen Link depend on a select group of volunteers to staff the phone lines. All volunteers receive extensive training, supervision and ongoing support.

Crisis Line volunteers must be at least 21 years of age, agree to serve one 4½-hour shift per week for at least one year, and be available for on-call and holiday coverage. Training is scheduled six times per year and volunteers are needed year round.

Teen Link volunteers must be between 13 and 20 years of age and may choose to be on the help line or serve as school liaisons who help to educate their peers about youth suicide prevention and Teen Link.



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