



Media Advisory

PHONES MATTER: BRITISH COLUMBIANS SEEK A HUMAN VOICE WHEN IN CRISIS

If you've used a crisis line for support, you are not alone: 505,000 British Columbians have used crisis lines when they were in distress. And if you reached out, chances are you reached out by telephone.

A recent survey, commissioned by the Crisis Centre of BC through Insights West to study crisis service use among British Columbians, found that even in an age of constant texting, British Columbians prefer talking on the phone (49%) instead of texting (19%) or chatting (14%) when they are looking for emotional support.

Although preference for phone-based crisis support increases with age (76% of those over the age of 55 preferred phones vs 58% of 35-54 year olds), 43% of those aged 18-34 still preferred phone.

"We are social animals, and we seek comfort from one another," remarks Stacy Ashton, Executive Director of the Crisis Centre of BC, who was not surprised by these findings. "When people are sad, angry, or afraid, they want to hear the warmth in another person's voice. Our words only communicate 20% of our meaning, so a text is very limited in how much support it can convey. The tone and pacing of our voices hold 80% of our meaning, and that's how our volunteers and staff on the lines let you know we understand and care about you."

These findings come just in time for Crisis Line Awareness Week (March 23 to 27, 2020), which draws attention to the crucial work BC's crisis lines do to support people when they are upset, in emotional pain, or thinking about suicide.

Almost twice as many British Columbians who were aware of crisis lines as an option have thought about using a crisis line (21%) than have actually used one (12%).

"If you are thinking about calling a crisis line, please call," says Ashton. "Being alone with painful, intense feelings is hard. It's not a weakness to reach out for help, it's a strength."

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If you are worried for yourself or a loved one, contact the Crisis Centre of BC, by phone or by chat. Not only do we provide emotional support for you, but we can help you support others in distress, and will reach out to loved ones on your behalf.

Additional Survey Findings

- Crisis lines are also crucial to those worried about a loved one: 68% of British Columbians said they would reach out to a crisis line on behalf of someone else, and 80% would recommend using a crisis line to a friend or family member.

Crisis Lines and Chat Contact

Vancouver Coastal Regional Distress Line: 604-872-3311

Sunshine Coast/Sea to Sky: 1-866-661-3311

Online Chat Service for Youth: www.YouthInBC.com (Noon to 1am)

Online Chat Service for Adults: www.CrisisCentreChat.ca (Noon to 1am)

MEDIA CONTACT

Jeffrey Preiss

Manager, Development and Communications

jpreiss@crisiscentre.bc.ca

604-561-6020

Stacy Ashton

Executive Director

sashton@crisiscentre.bc.ca

Research results are based on an online study conducted from 3 March, 2020 to 9 March, 2020 among a representative sample of 814n BC adults. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 3.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Survey commissioned by the Crisis Centre of BC and performed by Insights West.