



BC Crisis Line Network Highlights the Importance of Volunteerism: Celebrating Volunteer Appreciation Week

British Columbia - Volunteers are the backbone of the BC Crisis Line Network, which provides crisis support 24 hours a day, seven days a week to people needing emotional support, suicide prevention, and mental health crisis intervention.

According to Statistics Canada's most recent report on volunteering in Canada, in 2018, approximately 1.4 million people in British Columbia volunteered their time for charitable and non-profit organizations, which represents 54% of the province's population aged 15 and older.

The ten crisis centres that makeup BC Crisis Line Network engage 720 volunteers and 110 staff members.

"With a ratio of 7 to 1, it's clear we could only answer a fraction of our crisis calls without volunteers," says Stacy Ashton, Chairperson of the BC Crisis Line Network. "People volunteer in crisis centres because it is an opportunity to help people through their most difficult moments. We have all had crisis in our lives, and volunteering on crisis lines is a way people support others the way they have been supported or wish they could have been supported."

Volunteers on the crisis intervention and suicide prevention phone lines receive specialized training to handle difficult and complex issues during crisis calls. Many volunteers go on to become nurses, doctors, first responders, teachers, and counsellors, using their skills in suicide prevention and crisis intervention to save lives long after their volunteer commitment ends.

"Our volunteers come from all walks of life and bring diverse experiences and skills to their work," says Ashton. "I volunteered on the crisis lines in the 90's and carry the skills I learned and the people I had the privilege to help into all the work I've done since."

The BC Crisis Line Network encourages anyone interested in volunteering to reach out and learn about the various opportunities available on crisis intervention and suicide prevention phone lines in British Columbia.

The Network is committed to supporting people who need help during times of crisis. If you or someone you know is in crisis or considering suicide, please reach out:

Anywhere in BC 1800SUICIDE: 1-800-784-2433

Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789 (no area code required)

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