

## The Benefits of Reaching Out to One Another

By: Anonymous

The following is some research that shows that hotlines help people who are considering suicide:

[Gould and colleagues evaluated 1085 calls over 17 months.](#) The research trained crisis staff to ask specific questions to assess callers' suicidality at the beginning and end of call and to score their responses. Counselors also asked callers whether they would consent to a follow-up call from the researchers a week or two later. Not only did callers' suicidality subside during the calls, but their feelings of hopelessness and psychological pain had continued to diminish when the researchers called them back, Gould and colleagues reported in 2007 in the journal *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*.

It is not just hotlines that can help people. It is a basic tenet of psychology that sharing one's concerns with someone, especially a trained listener, can help alleviate suffering and can often provide resolution to one's problems. I learned this the hard way from my own experience.

One day I woke up feeling stressed about some functions I had to attend to in my life. I was feeling negative, and the thought occurred to me that if I just checked out all my troubles would be eliminated. The more I thought about it the more convinced I became that this was the answer. I loaded up a backpack with my sleeping bag and tent, left my apartment, and went to a private place in the woods just outside of town. I did not know how I was going to take my life, but I thought that I was going to go through with it in some way and escape my responsibilities. However, after laying in my tent for two nights and truly coming to grips with my action, I realized I did not wish to die. I wanted to live. I went back to my apartment and called my therapist and case manager and arranged to see them right away. Over the next several days I talked with people about what was stressing me, my yearning to somehow get out of it, and what I learned about my desire to live. I ended up feeling much better after receiving their support. I could have saved myself a lot of stress and hassle had I talked to someone when I was feeling challenged.

When it comes down to it, very few people wish to end their lives. It is common knowledge among emergency responders that many attempters try to get help after going through with some process of taking their lives. The good news is that one does not have to back oneself into a corner in order to get help. We can all help ourselves and one another by learning to talk about our concerns and intentions. This includes asking about and listening to the other person as well. By reaching out to one another we will create a world in which everyone shares themselves instead of sometimes harming themselves.