

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

powered by

Kids Help Phone 

NATIONAL LAUNCH OF FIRST 24/7, FREE SUPPORT SERVICE VIA TEXT

QUESTION AND ANSWER

What is Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone?

Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone is Canada's first free and confidential 24/7 texting service that utilizes Crisis Text Line's established online platform in Canada. Youth with a text/SMS-enabled cellphone can text a trained volunteer Crisis Responder in either French or English. All conversations between the texter and volunteer Crisis Responder are confidential. There is no need for a data plan, an internet connection or app.

How will youth reach a volunteer Crisis Responder in their preferred official language?

Individuals wishing to connect with an English-speaking volunteer Crisis Responder will text **TALK to 686868** and French-speaking youth will text **TEXTO to 686868** to reach a French-speaking volunteer Crisis Responder.

Why is Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone being launched nationally?

Kids Help Phone has long-recognized that technology is rapidly changing the way young people communicate. Kids Help Phone's research has uncovered that 42 per cent of young people would rather write than speak about their problem and 71 per cent said they would welcome a texting option. After a successful pilot launch in Manitoba and select provinces earlier this year, results showed that young people welcomed the opportunity to seek mental health support through texting. A partnership with Canada Health Infoway, along with the support of funding donors, is providing Kids Help Phone with the required support to offer the services nationally as part of its continuum of mental health and well-being support options.

When did the pilot for Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone take place?

Kids Help Phone launched Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone on a pilot basis in Manitoba in February 2018 followed by a gradual introduction into other provinces including Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nunavut, and the Atlantic Provinces. As well, the texting service was recently offered to students at the University of Guelph in Ontario.

How many texting conversations took place during the pilot?

More than 13,000 texting conversations took place during the service test period from February to October 2018.

How were the findings from the pilot study derived?

Texters were asked, following a texting session, if they would answer a few questions about their experience with Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone. Kids Help Phone received guidance from subject matter experts to develop a robust evaluation.

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Who Is using the Service?

Thirty-seven per cent of respondents were between 15 to 17 years-of-age and 22 per cent were between 18 to 24. And, as with the users of other Kids Help Phone services, potentially vulnerable youth reached out for help through texting. Twenty-two per cent of respondents identified as bi- or pansexual and 15 per cent identified as questioning, asexual, gay or lesbian. As well, 11 per cent identified as Indigenous with nine per cent identifying as a visible minority.

What were some of the most common issues that concerned young people using Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone?

The top five reasons young people reached out to Kids Help Phone through texting were due to anxiety, relationship issues, and feelings of isolation. Twenty-four per cent of youth connected with a volunteer Crisis Responder because of suicidal thoughts. These issues are consistent with the reasons why youth turn to Kids Help Phone for support through one-on-one phone counselling and Live Chat, Kids Help Phone's instant online messaging service. Crisis intervention was, at times, a factor in the texting interaction requiring the professional Supervisor to conduct between one and two active rescues every day. This means we are saving one to two lives every day.

What were some of the major findings from the pilot study?

- **Reduction in Stress Levels:** 86 per cent of participants reported a meaningful reduction in stress after finishing a texting conversation with the Crisis Responder.
- **Improved Mood:** 87 per cent of respondents reported feeling at least one of the following categories after having communication with a Crisis Responder: less alone, less distressed, less upset, more hopeful, more confident and more in-control.
- **Increased Confidence:** 52 per cent of respondents said that they felt confident that they could now cope with their situations after a texting conversation.
- **Service Satisfaction:** 83 per cent of respondents said they were satisfied with the service they received, and 81 per cent said they were likely to recommend the texting service to a friend.
- **Early Intervention:** 79 per cent of respondents said had they not engaged in a texting support session they would have done one of the following: managed the issue on their own, not spoken to anyone; ignored the issue and hoped it got better or went away. Seven per cent said if the service had not been available, they would have gone to the emergency room.

How will Kids Help Phone incorporate their learning from the pilot study?

It is Kids Help Phone's mission to continue leading the work to ensure youth receive the help they need, when they need it, and in a manner, that suits them best. Findings from the service test launch will be used to build a body of data to inform continuous service improvements, training of the volunteer Crisis Responders and public policy. Findings from the pilot, offered only in English, will also inform the availability of this service for French-speaking youth, who will now be able to connect with a French-speaking Crisis Responder.

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Who is Crisis Text Line?

Crisis Text Line is free, 24/7 support for people in crisis. With 84 million messages processed to date, Crisis Text Line leverages technology and data to support texters faster, better, and cheaper. In 2013, Crisis Text Line was launched quietly in two cities in the US and within 4 months was being used in all 295 US area codes. Internationally, Crisis Text Line is expanding rapidly through partnerships with social entrepreneurs and existing organizations.

How Will This Service Help Youth Across Canada?

The texting service will help improve access for young people in both French and English seeking support, especially in rural and remote areas where fast, secure internet service is not always available. Texters do not need a data plan or WIFI to reach a volunteer Crisis Responder and they will be able to have seamless conversations over hours and days. As well, it will link them to local services in their community or refer them into Kids Help Phone's professional counselling services as required. This texting resolution support service will offer a free and easily accessible alternative for young people to reach out for help at any time.

How Does Someone Become a Crisis Responder?

Crisis Responders must have a secure internet connection and a willingness to learn how to support young people over text. With the national expansion of Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone, more volunteer Crisis Responders will be required, especially those who are bilingual in French and English. Those interested in volunteering are encouraged to fill out an application, by visiting: <http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/CrisisTextLine-volunteers>

What are the Requirements of a Crisis Responder?

Crisis Responders must be willing to undergo a vulnerable sector police check through their local police station and be willing to fulfill and pass the requirements of a rigorous, 36-hour online training program. Volunteers must commit to four hours per week for at least one-year. The texting support service will be offered 24/7 and there are many shift opportunities available.

Why Is Kids Help Phone Using Volunteer Crisis Responders?

By using volunteer Crisis Responders, Kids Help Phone will be able to increase its capacity to help young people through the 24/7 texting service. Crisis Text Line has shown that volunteer Crisis Responders, when trained how to use empathetic listening, can build trust and rapport as well as help move a texter from a hot moment to a cool calm. Kids Help Phone's supervisors will be a moment away should a situation escalate and to provide guidance throughout a texting conversation.

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What Type of Support Will the Crisis Responder Provide?

Volunteer Crisis Responders will not be offering counselling. Crisis Responders are volunteers and will be trained to take texters through a five-stage structured conversation designed to bring each texter from a hot moment to a cool calm. Paid supervisors will monitor the texting platform, offer coaching to volunteers when needed, ensure Kids Help Phone meets its legal duties regarding safety and reporting and will step in should a situation escalate. Kids Help Phone’s professional counsellors will continue to provide counselling to youth through the phone line and the online Live Chat channel.

Will Kids Help Phone Continue to Offer its 24/7 Phone Counselling Service?

Yes, Kids Help Phone will continue to offer its 24/7 confidential, professional and anonymous phone counselling service as well as its online Live Chat counselling service. Both services have played a critical role in helping young people deal with a variety of issues including anxiety, questions related to gender identity and coming out, relationship issues, substance-use, violence or thoughts of suicide. For close to three decades, Kids Help Phone has been in the forefront in responding to the evolving needs and demands of young people.

How is Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone funded?

Kids Help Phone relies on donors to continually innovate and stay relevant to youth in Canada. Charities operate from a scarcity mindset – and this can make innovation difficult. Kids Help Phone is a proven innovator that has secured significant funding to launch the service from generous funders. Founding donors to the new service include: Bell Let’s Talk, BMO Financial Group, Boston Pizza Foundation Future Prospects, Great-West Life, London Life, and Canada Life, RBC Foundation, The Co-operators Group Limited, TELUS, Shail Silver and three anonymous donors. And now, thanks to Canada Health Infoway, and several of the founding donors, the free and confidential texting support service will now be launched nationally.

Where is the information captured through the platform stored?

The texts will be directed to the online platform in Canada where Kids Help Phone’s volunteer Crisis Responders will be able to read and respond to the messages. All conversations between the texter and responder are confidential.