

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Crisis Text Line Releases First-of-Its-Kind Global Report on the Economic Impact of Volunteer-Powered Mental Health Support

Growing Mental Health Crisis Drives \$185M in Global Economic Value From Scaled Crisis Support Across the U.S., U.K., and Canada

NEW YORK – January 20, 2026 – [Crisis Text Line](#), a leading nonprofit organization that provides free, 24/7, confidential mental health support, today released [The Hidden Economic Value of Online Crisis Volunteers](#), a new global study led by the organization that quantifies the economic footprint of trained volunteer online crisis counselors operating at scale across multiple countries. The report finds that between 2018 and 2024, volunteers in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada contributed more than 7 million hours of crisis support and training, creating over \$185 million USD in global economic value.

Since 2013, Crisis Text Line’s volunteer-powered, text-based model has helped address critical gaps in mental health systems by delivering immediate, skilled crisis intervention when traditional services are often unavailable or overwhelmed. Beginning in 2018, the model expanded through partnerships with Kids Help Phone in Canada and Shout by Mental Health Innovations in the United Kingdom, collectively training more than 120,000 volunteers.

“For the first time, we can clearly see the scale and value of online crisis volunteering at a global level,” said Margaret Meagher, chief impact officer at Crisis Text Line. “This report makes visible the significant contribution of trained volunteers whose work strengthens mental health systems every day. It shows how human connection, delivered through a scalable, digital model, can help meet urgent mental health needs when traditional systems are under strain.”

The analysis brings together data from Crisis Text Line, Kids Help Phone and Shout by Mental Health Innovations, highlighting the scale of this volunteer network. Between 2018 and 2024, the three organizations nearly doubled their annual global economic value, from \$14 million USD to \$28 million USD, demonstrating both growing mental health needs and the model’s scalability across healthcare systems.

“Mental health systems are under increasing strain as demand continues to outpace traditional care,” said Dena Trujillo, CEO of Crisis Text Line. “This study shows that investing in people and training can expand access to crisis support, and that volunteer-powered models can play a meaningful role in strengthening these systems.”

The report also notes the critical role volunteers played during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the network nearly doubled its economic contribution in a single year as demand surged. This contribution did not decline after the peak of the pandemic, underscoring the need for continued

mental health support. Since 2022, volunteer engagement has generated at least \$27 million USD annually. Across the three countries included in the report, volunteers have supported nearly 7 million people through 2024, demonstrating that this volunteer-powered digital model can operate reliably and sustainably at a large scale across national contexts.

“Unpaid labor such as caring for children or older adults, volunteering, mentoring, or supporting cultural and ecological initiatives are essential to the functioning and wellbeing of society,” said Meagher. “These forms of labor contributions underpin national resilience in the face of complex and intersecting societal challenges including mental health crises, social isolation, rising inequality, and aging populations.”

The full Hidden Economic Value of Online Crisis Volunteers study and additional findings can be found [here](#).

About the Research

[The Hidden Economic Value of Online Crisis Volunteers](#) was produced in partnership with the University of Sydney’s Mental Wealth Initiative and the Research & Impact team at Crisis Text Line, with contributions from Kids Help Phone and Mental Health Innovations. Economic value calculations assign the national median wage in each country to unpaid volunteer time spent providing crisis support.

About Crisis Text Line

[Crisis Text Line](#) is a global nonprofit dedicated to supporting people through their toughest moments. We focus on crisis intervention and prevention, providing free, 24/7 confidential support through a text-based platform that meets people where they are. We pair human connection with scalable technology, research, and partnerships to strengthen mental health systems and drive lasting change. Since 2013, we have trained more than 120,000 volunteers who have supported over 17 million crisis conversations across multiple languages, contributing more than 8 million volunteer hours through our partner network in Canada (Kids Help Phone), Ireland (spunout), and the UK (Shout). For every crisis conversation supported, it's estimated that our volunteers engaged in or prevented another crisis moment in their everyday lives - totalling over 32 million crises responded or averted worldwide. In 2025, Crisis Text Line acquired Aquí Estoy and plans to expand free, 24/7 text-based mental health support across 20 Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America, Spain, and the Caribbean. To learn more visit www.crisistextline.org or follow Crisis Text Line on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). To inquire about joining our partnership network and using our model and tools to deliver text-based mental health support in your context, email us at info@crisistextline.org.