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Research Plan: Crisis Text Line Evaluation

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**Introduction**

The objective of this evaluation project is to determine if the Crisis Text Line is meeting the needs of individuals that are involved with the program and that the service that the organization provides is creating positive results. In researching these two very important aspects, a more specific question can then be answered: “Are there alternative methods of providing communication to help-seekers that will benefit a more diverse demographic range?”.

**Stakeholders**

There are many individuals involved in the operations on the platform of the Crisis Text Line. These individuals include the members of the general population who utilize the services offered, Supervisors and Coaches that oversee the communications on the platform, the volunteers that communicate on the platform directly with those that are utilizing the service, and also those that manage the operations on and off of the platform. Outside of the daily operations of the agency, there are stakeholders who are financial contributors, which include those who donate to the organization and tax payers, as the organization is federally funded, and also the general public, as the Crisis Text Line serves to resolve crisis situations, which in theory, affects communities as a whole nationwide.

**Methods**

In order to answer the aforementioned questions regarding the operations of the Crisis Text Line, an outcome evaluation using both qualitative and quantitative methods must be used. Using this mixed method approach will ensure that information is gathered from sources that not only show how the Crisis Text Line has affected the general public, but also information that will relinquish a better understanding as to how all data gathered is valid to the purpose of the evaluation project. To answer the proposed research question, it is important to focus on observing outcome results of the Crisis Text Line’s program. Those results can then be analyzed along with other research data to find any potential flaws in the services offered and any opportunities for growth or expansion.

There is a significant amount of research, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, that has been published by authors who have questioned the effectiveness of the Crisis Text Line’s services in regards to demographic diversity and means of delivering it’s services. There are also a significant amount of articles published that address crisis interventions and helplines in general. These articles include (but are not limited to) research that was conducted using surveys, interviews, and also observations. This information along with community records and records provided by the Crisis Text Line showing statistical information regarding what topics their services have addressed along with demographic data will be useful in the evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the textline, insight on practical intervention, and to potentially gain insight or discover alternatives to methods of delivery to improve the services offered by the textline. In addition to this, the evaluator has the opportunity to observe the operations of the Crisis Text Line and is able to observe and receive feedback for services provided from those who utilize the textline’s resources. The evaluator also has the opportunity to observe and discuss many aspects of the Crisis Text Line with those who work in the organization to provide services for those seeking crisis intervention. This data collection method, unlike publicly accessible articles and data, offers an alternate perception and additional data that can be used in answering the research question for the project.