

9-8-8

Suicide Crisis
Helpline



eQUITY COLLABORATIVE:
COMMUNITY of pRACTICE

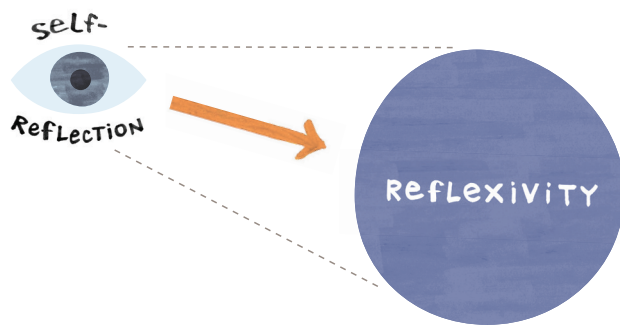
Self-reflection Tool

The purpose of this tool



This resource will guide responders and organizations working in the crisis and distress line sector through six topics related to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.

The following questions will inspire reflection and prompt discussion, with a focus on improving care, building trust, and promoting equity in crisis interactions. “Areas for Action” are included to help embed accountability and provide concrete steps for addressing disparities, increasing our sensitivity to cultural differences, and creating a more inclusive space for callers and texters.



Moving beyond reflection to reflexivity

Self-reflection

Self-reflection can help us gain a deeper understanding of our thoughts, emotions and behaviours. By reflecting on personal experiences and biases, we are reminded of the unique perspectives people bring. This awareness can help to identify and challenge assumptions we may have and improve how we interact with others. At an individual level, reflection helps us understand how different interactions affect us and, in turn, how our responses impact those we support. As a team, reflection can highlight shared strengths and potential areas for growth.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity moves beyond surface-level reflection and encourages us to explore how our experiences, beliefs and biases are shaped by larger social, historical and systemic structures. It asks us to examine positional privilege and intersectionality to understand that our multiple social identities (e.g., race, gender, class, sexuality) intersect and overlap to create unique experiences of discrimination, power and privilege that shape how we engage or relate with others (Crenshaw, 1989).

Trough this process, we see ourselves as existing within complex systems and can work toward more thoughtful and responsive interactions with callers and texters. Reflexivity is an ongoing process that requires us to sit with discomfort as we confront deeply held biases or assumptions that influence our practice. It can transform how we approach our work, ground us in ethical considerations, and further the pursuit of equity and justice (Ng et al., 2015; Ng et al., 2022).



Statement of belonging

When you need support, you deserve a place of belonging and safety, where you feel accepted and welcomed

Caller and texter belonging is at the core of service quality. Belonging is a feeling of being authentically valued and accepted, and is the result of a service that is committed to accessible, collaborative, respectful and safe strengths-based approaches.



There are many steps to belonging and we all play a role. As we seek to increase belonging for everyone who reaches out to a crisis or distress line, it can be useful to reflect on current practices, possible futures and opportunities to continue to work towards services that are equitable, diverse, and accessible.

Responders

EQUITY IN THE CRISIS SECTOR

COMMUNITY Awareness &

ANTI- STIGMA

ENHANCING TRUST

QUESTIONS

What are my intersecting social and cultural identities? What is my positionality?

How might these contribute to beliefs and biases? **How might this impact my engagement with callers and texters?**

As I practise reflexivity, **do I critically examine the social, historical, and structural factors** that influence me and that shape the realities of callers and texters?

How can I better understand a caller or texter's positionality to collaboratively support them? What strengths does their social location contribute?

- ✓ Responders can commit to cultivating belonging.
- ✓ Responders can learn and practise critical reflexivity.

What are my personal beliefs about mental health and suicide? What social and historical factors shaped these beliefs?

How do these beliefs influence my responses to callers and texters? Are there differences in how I relate to some callers and texters?

How can I work to **identify and address stigmatizing language or beliefs** that I hold?

- ✓ Responders can recognize their own stigma, and can also consider the impact of stigma on callers and texters, and the role of self-stigma.



How will I know if I have established sufficient trust and safety to allow for meaningful collaboration?

How can I build trust with callers and texters who may have had experiences with institutions that have decreased trust (e.g., through discrimination, trauma or stigmatization)?

- ✓ Responders can undertake training to enhance the relationships they develop with callers and texters.
- ✓ Responders can use skills in establishing and maintaining boundaries to contribute to clear expectations for callers and texters.
- ✓ Responders can provide choice and collaboration with callers and texters wherever possible, to enhance trust.



AREAS FOR ACTION

CRISIS INTERVENTION

a DIVERSE WORKFORCE

eVALUATING EDIA

How can I meaningfully collaborate with callers and texters on decisions related to crisis intervention?

How can I offer meaningful choice and support autonomy?

What practices can I use to reduce potential harms that come from engaging emergency services?

✓ Responders can learn crisis response skills that include asking callers and texters about their identities and eliciting their preferences and values.

What can I do to actively contribute to a workplace culture that values and respects all identities and experiences?

What lived experiences can I/do I share at my workplace?

How might my intersecting identities impact my interactions with others at my organization?

✓ Responders can engage in self-reflection, assess their own wellbeing and seek support or supervision when needed.

Am I aware of opportunities for training and resources from my organization to work with diverse callers and texters?

Have I accessed these? Do I need more?

How can my workplace better equip me to provide culturally-responsive, inclusive and accessible support to service users?

✓ Responders can self-assess their own areas of competence related to equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility.



QUESTIONS

AREAS FOR ACTION

Organizations

EQUITY IN THE CRISIS SECTOR

COMMUNITY Awareness &

ANTI- STIGMA

ENHANCING TRUST

QUESTIONS

How do we define diversity within our organization, and do we consider a wide range of intersectional identities?

Is our organization culturally responsive to the communities and groups that we serve?

What can we do to ensure that our services are accessible and inclusive to people with diverse identities or experiences, including those with diverse physical, sensory or cognitive (dis) abilities and needs?

- ✓ Organizations can commit to cultivating belonging.
- ✓ Organizations can learn and practise critical reflexivity.
- ✓ Organizations can actively engage with the communities they serve and include diverse lived experiences to understand needs, values and strengths for equitable program development and service delivery.

How do we contribute to increasing the mental health literacy of the communities we serve and to decreasing stigma?

Have we examined all of our public messages, documents, images, advertising, policies, standards and clinical approaches to ensure that we are not unintentionally contributing to stigma?

- ✓ Organizations can contribute to public and community education and work with community-facing groups to build awareness and address stigma through advertising and communications.

Have we created opportunities for conversations about how we can be culturally affirming and safe for callers and texters? Have we followed through with action based on those conversations?

Are we transparent about how we use and protect callers' and texters' privacy and security, especially around how we collect and manage personal information?

- ✓ Organizations can commit to transparency and communication to enhance trust.
- ✓ Organizations can partner with trusted community leaders to enhance the sense of trust within the community.

AREAS FOR ACTION



CRISIS INTERVENTION

a DIVERSE WORKFORCE

eVALUATING EDIA

Do responders and other staff at our organization have opportunities for continuing education about trauma and violence-informed approaches to care?

- ✓ Organizations can provide supervision to leverage critical reflexivity to build cultural and psychological safety.
- ✓ Organizations and communities can co-design resources and guides to build understanding of caller and texter identity to ensure questions are appropriate and responsive.
- ✓ Organizations and communities can co-design programs that provide alternate/non-police responses to callers and texters that require emergency interventions.

What are we doing to ensure that our team reflects the diversity of the communities we serve, particularly those who are often underserved?

How can we ensure that our staff feel valued and respected at our organization, and what supports and mechanisms do we have in place to address any challenges team members may face?

- ✓ Organizations can ensure staff are aware of robust supports and resources available to them.
- ✓ Organizations can adopt inclusive and equitable practices related to recruitment, hiring, onboarding, promotion, training, education and compensation to attract and retain a diverse candidate pool.
- ✓ Organizations can provide adequate opportunities for diverse candidates to enter this field.

Who is accessing our services? Who is not accessing our services?

What processes do we have in place to gather feedback from callers and texters about their experiences using our services?

What does success in EDIA look like for our team, and how do we understand and measure it?

- ✓ Organizations can develop a data strategy that includes looking at equity outcomes within their service.
- ✓ Organizations can ensure they have considered data governance, particularly the ownership, control, access to and possession of data by communities, particularly equity-seeking communities.



References

Crenshaw, K. (1989). ***Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics.*** University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989(1), Article 8. bit.ly/4jtCiIN

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Ng, S. L., Kinsella, E. A., Friesen, F., & Hodges, B. (2015). ***Reclaiming a theoretical orientation to reflection in medical education research: A critical narrative review.*** *Medical Education*, 49(5), 461–475. bit.ly/42hmgdP

You deserve to be heard. We're here to listen.

If you are thinking about suicide, or you're worried about someone else, we want to help. A safe space to talk, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

If your immediate safety is at risk, call 9-1-1 right away.



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