

SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES

How People with Lived
Experience Make Mental Health
Crisis Services More Effective

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- ▶ <https://www.bazelon.org/resource-library/webinars/>

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DISCLAIMER

This webinar was developed [in part] under contract number HHSS283201200021I/HHS28342003T from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.

LEARNING COMMUNITY: PEER SERVICES

1. Today: **Serving our Communities: How People with Lived Experience Make Mental Health Crisis Services More Effective**, presented by the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.
2. Coming soon: **Serving our Communities: How People with Lived Experience Make Mental Health Crisis Services More Effective for Youth**, presented by the National Disability Rights Network.

SPEAKERS

- ▶ **Monica Porter Gilbert** (she/her): Policy & Legal Advocacy Attorney, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
- ▶ **Nemu HJ** (they/them): Education & Communications Manager, #SafeHotlines campaign, Trans Lifeline
- ▶ **Jahmil Roberts** (name/only): Hotline Operations & Care Manager, Trans Lifeline
- ▶ **Dushoun Almond**: Program Manager, Brownsville in Violence Out
- ▶ **Steve Miccio** (he/him): Chief Executive Officer, People USA

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ▶ **Understand** what makes peer-provided crisis services effective along the service continuum for people with serious mental illness (SMI) or serious emotional disturbance (SED).
- ▶ **Learn** from multiple real-world successful examples of peer-led programs.
- ▶ **Identify** how to leverage federal, state, and local funding to pay for peer-involved crisis services.
- ▶ **Actively engage** with presenters and other participants to address any questions about bringing peer-led programs to your community.

AGENDA

1. Introduction to Peer Services: Bazelon
2. Trans Lifeline
3. Brownsville In Violence Out
4. People USA

INTRODUCTION TO PEER SERVICES

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, dynamic feel.

About the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

- ▶ Mission: To protect and advance the civil rights of adults and children with mental health and developmental disabilities.
- ▶ <https://www.bazelon.org/>
- ▶ Follow us on:
 - ▶ LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-bazelon-center-for-mental-health-law/>
 - ▶ Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bazeloncenter>
 - ▶ Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bazeloncenter>
 - ▶ X (Twitter): <https://twitter.com/bazeloncenter>



JUDGE DAVID L.
BAZELON
CENTER
FOR MENTAL HEALTH LAW

Recall takeaways from last year:

- ▶ Black and brown people with SMI/SED are disproportionately likely to experience deadly harm from a law enforcement response to a call for help
- ▶ An emergency that involves mental health should receive a mental health response, the same way a physical health emergency receives a medical response

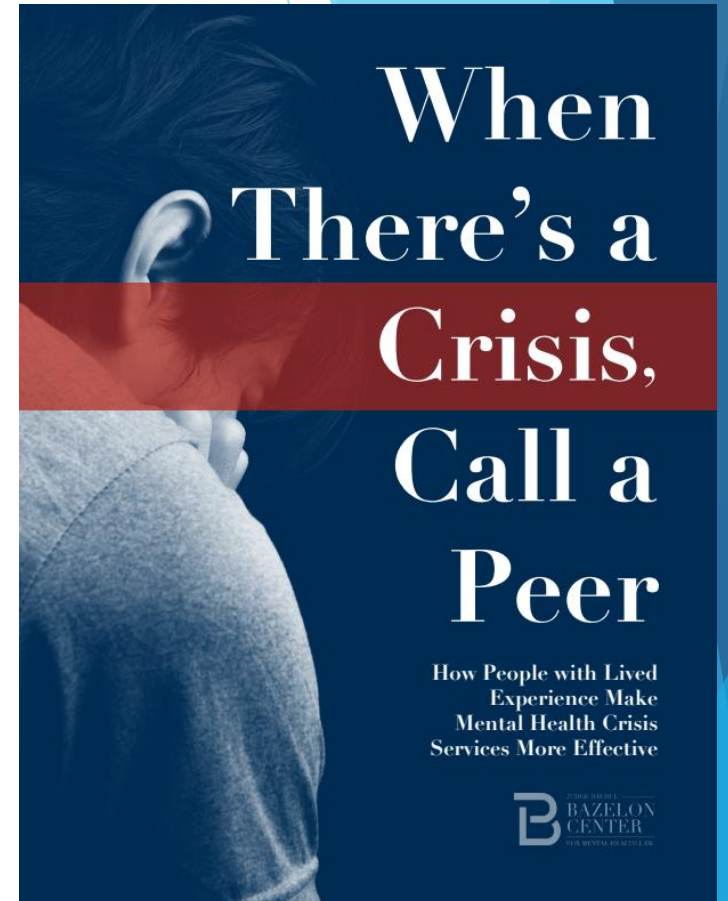
Resource: Bazelon Center and NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, [Community-Based Services for Black People with Mental Illness: Advancing an Alternative to Police](#) (2023).



This year: What should we do instead?

- ▶ Advance peer-led responses to mental health calls.
- ▶ Make peer supports – provided by people with lived experience with SMI/SED or with receiving services – central to the delivery of mental health crisis services.
- ▶ Ensure diversity of service providers reflects the community they serve.

Resource: Bazelon Center, [When There's a Crisis, Call a Peer: How People with Lived Experience Make Mental Health Crisis Services More Effective](#) (2024).



When we center peer-led responses, people with disabilities can be...

1. Less likely to be admitted to emergency rooms & hospitals
2. More likely to engage with community-based services & to feel empowered & hopeful
3. Less likely to be institutionalized, incarcerated, or need crisis services in the future

Resources: SAMHSA, [Peers as Crisis Service Providers](#) (2015);

SAMHSA, [Peers Supporting Recovery from Mental Health Conditions](#) (2017).

Peer-led hotlines & warmlines

- ▶ Call Blackline: <https://www.callblackline.com/>
- ▶ **Trans Lifeline:** <https://translifeline.org/>
- ▶ Wildflower Alliance:
<https://wildfloweralliance.org/peer-support-line/>
- ▶ Wings Across Alabama: <https://wingsacrossal.org/>



Photo source: <https://translifeline.org/hotline/>

Peer-led community-based mobile response and outreach teams

- ▶ Behavioral Health Aide Program (Alaska):
<https://www.anthc.org/behavioral-health-aide-program/>
- ▶ **Brownsville In Violence Out (New York):**
<https://camba.org/programs/brownsville-in-violence-out/>
- ▶ CAHOOTS (Oregon):
<https://whitebirdclinic.org/cahoots/>
- ▶ Street Crisis Response Team (California):
<https://www.sf.gov/street-crisis-response-team>

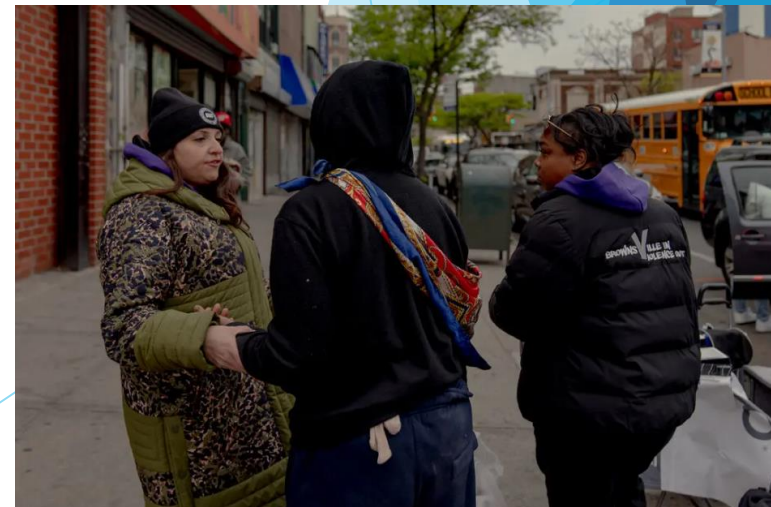


Photo by Amir Hamja for the New York Times

Peer respites

- ▶ Kiva Centers - Karaya & Juniper (Massachusetts):
<https://kivacenters.org/karaya-peer-respite/>,
<https://kivacenters.org/juniper-respite-peer/>
- ▶ MHA of Nebraska - Keya House (Nebraska):
<https://mha-ne.org/programs-services/keya.html>
- ▶ **People USA - Rose Houses (New York):**
<https://people-usa.org/rose-houses/>
- ▶ Promise Resource Network - Retreat @ The Plaza (North Carolina):
<https://promiseresourcenetwork.org/>

Photo source: <https://people-usa.org/rose-houses/>



Why peer-led services?

- ▶ Credible messengers
- ▶ Culturally responsive
- ▶ Cost-effective
- ▶ Focus on recovery

Resources: Bazelon Center, [When There's a Crisis, Call a Peer: How People with Lived Experience Make Mental Health Crisis Services More Effective \(2024\)](#); SAMHSA, [National Model Standards for Peer Support Certification \(2023\)](#).

Questions? Contact:

Monica Porter Gilbert

Policy & Legal Advocacy Attorney

monicag@bazelon.org



Trans Lifeline

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of blue, ranging from light sky blue to deep navy blue. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect.



TRANS LIFELINE'S BACKGROUND

From: **Jahmil Roberts** and **Nemu HJ**

JAHMIL ROBERTS

Jahmil (name/only) has worked at Trans Lifeline for 3 years. A journey that began as a Part-Time Hotline Operator, now holds Jahmil as the Hotline Operations & Care Manager.

Jahmil is a community organizer and professional who helps build practices of connection through principles of love, integrity, and transformation. Jahmil encourages equity, self-care and sustainability, while building trust through consistency, curiosity, and play. Jahmil creates spaces to name and address the impacts of systemic harm, and nurture individual and collective growth, healing, and holding.

**Operations &
Care Manager**



NEMU HJ

Nemu (they/them) is the Education & Communications Manager for Trans Lifeline's #SafeHotlines campaign. They believe that building community power necessitates building shared knowledge and interdependence. Their journey at Trans Lifeline first started 3 years ago as the Research Assistant for the Microgrants program.

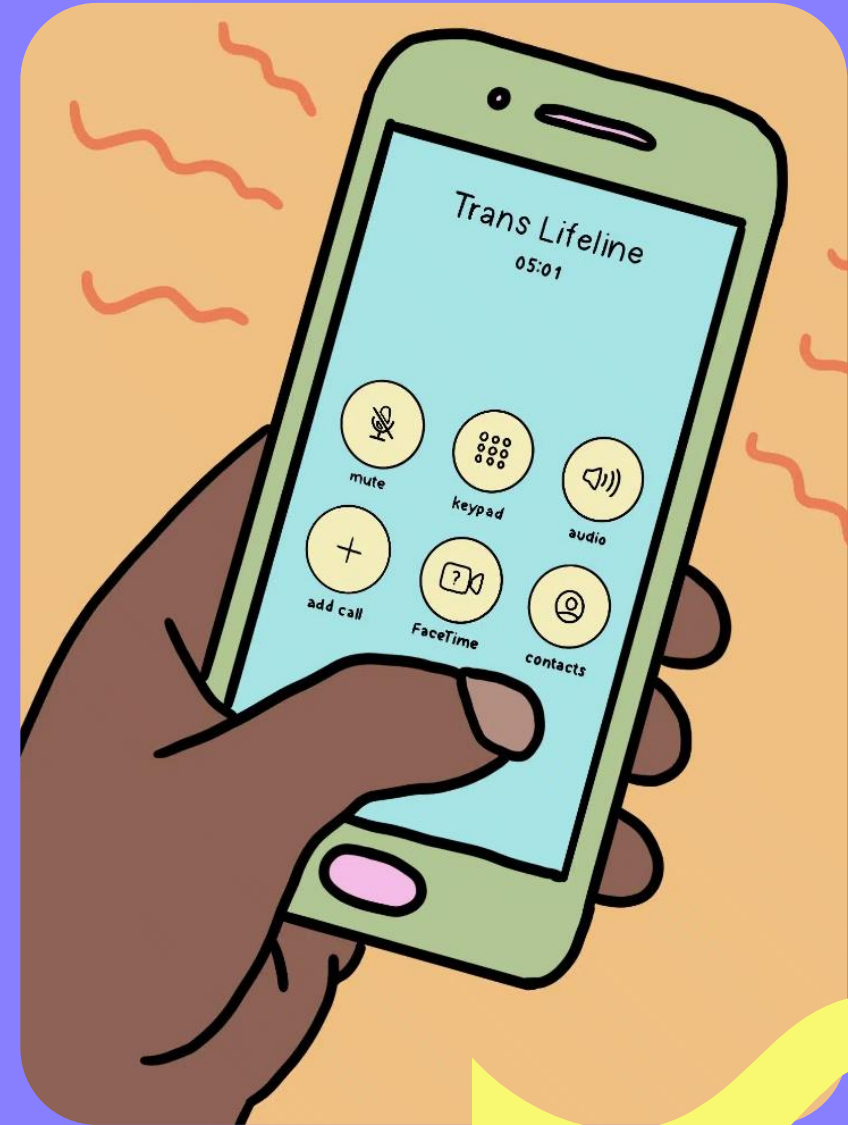
Nemu is a community organizer committed to building a more just and livable world for all people. They are also an animal lover, jeweler, and a Virgo.

**Education &
Comms Manager**



AGENDA OUTLINE

- **About Trans Lifeline**
- **History of Trans Lifeline**
- **Trans Lifeline in 2023**
- **Hotline Department Overview**
- **Hotline Specifics Overview**
- **2022 Hotline Stats**
- **About #SafeHotlines Campaign**
- **The Role of Identity on Crisis Hotlines**
- **Increasing Peer-Led Services**



ABOUT TRANS LIFELINE

Trans Lifeline is a grassroots hotline and microgrants 501(c)(3) non-profit organization offering direct emotional and financial support to trans people in crisis – for the trans community, by the trans community.

Trans Lifeline's mission is to connect trans people to the community support and resources we need to survive and thrive.

We envision a world where trans people have the connection, economic security, and care everyone needs and deserves – free of prisons and police.



HISTORY OF TL

2014

Trans Lifeline's hotline launches shortly after Trans Day of Remembrance in response to the epidemic of suicide in our community, with the knowledge that we deserve community-based support free from police and involuntary hospitalization.

2016

Microgrants is founded in November as Trans Assistance Project to provide access to low-barrier funds for legal name and identification changes.

2017

Microgrants becomes part of Trans Lifeline. That same year, we create a free community-supported database of location-specific requirements and fees for updating our document.

2018

Trans Lifeline undergoes a leadership transition. Our Family & Friends Hotline launches to resource friends, partners, and families to support their trans loved ones from a trans-centered perspective.

source: <https://translifeline.org/about/history/>

HISTORY OF TL

(CON'T)

2019

The Inside Advocacy Project was created by trans people directly impacted by the carceral state.

Inside Advocacy Exists within our Microgrants department and provides financial aid to trans people that are currently incarcerated, detained, or recently released in the form of commissary funds, reentry grants, and ID changes

2020

The Spanish Language extension launches in July with seed funding from Twilio in response to increased calls from Spanish-speaking trans folks and detained immigrants.

Our Microgrant program ensures 75% of Name change Microgrants each cycle are reserved for BIPOC trans people to dismantle structural barriers caused by white supremacy

We partner with MTV to address voter disenfranchisement among trans youth by updating 255 IDs by the 2020 elections

2021

HRT Microgrants provides a year's worth of free HRT.

National resource library launches on our website.

Trans-centered domestic and intimate partner violence services are brought to the Hotline.

2022

Our new Advocacy Department launches our Safe Hotlines Campaign to end nonconsensual interventions on crisis hotlines, and we begin offering a Gender-Affirming Hair Removal Microgrant

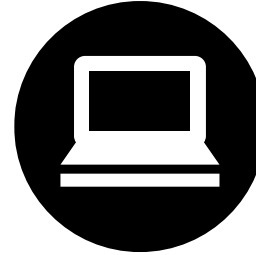


TL IN 2023

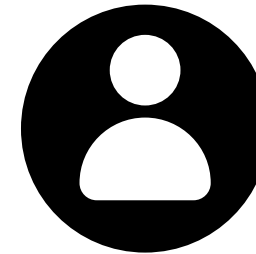
Trans Lifeline officially recognized the Trans Lifeline Workers Union and started bargaining talks.

Trans Lifeline refreshed their board, and a new board chair has emerged.

Trans Lifeline is starting to navigate research through their advocacy and hotline partnerships.



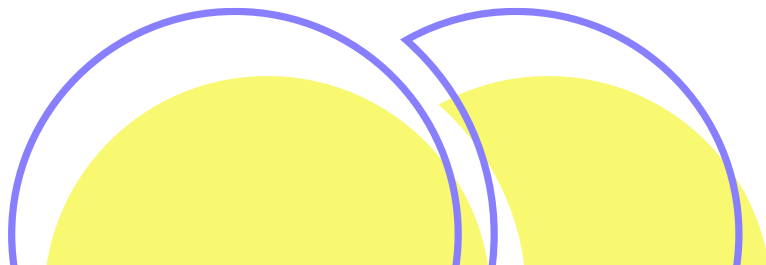
Unionized
Workplace



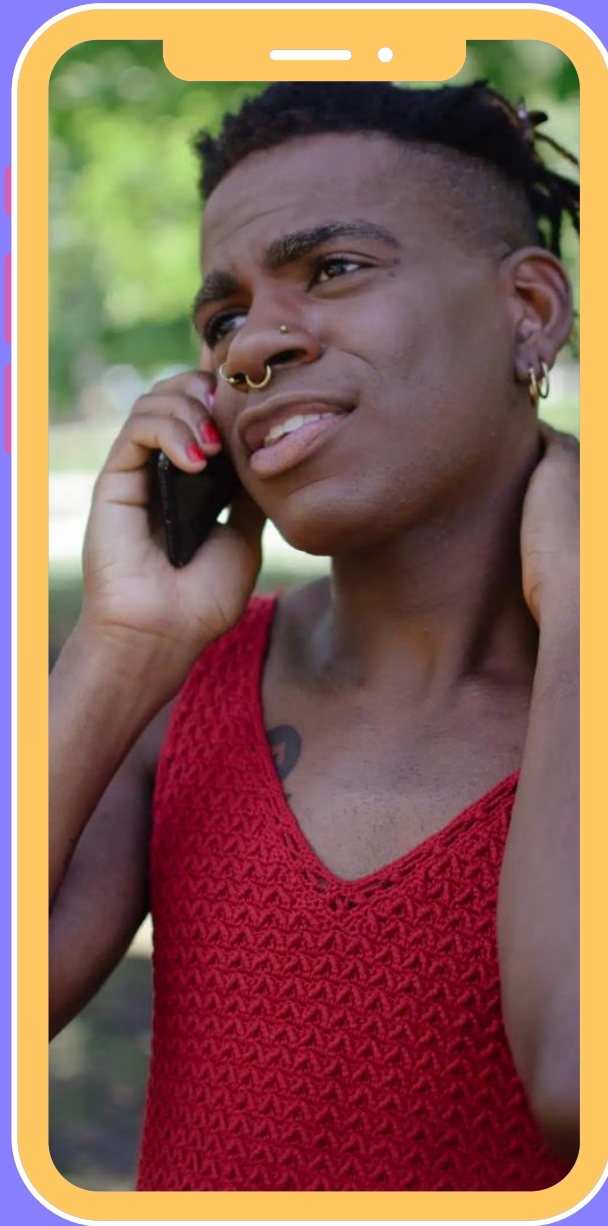
New Board Chair



Research



HOTLINE DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW



Trans Lifeline's Hotline is a peer support phone-based direct service run by trans people for our trans and questioning peers.

Trans Lifeline begins offering a peer English hotline in 2014. In 2018 a line for cis-gendered Significant Others, Friends, Family and Allies (SOFFA) of trans people is added, and Spanish Language Services (SLS) the summer of 2020.

The work at TL is peer support and the goal is keeping cops out of care. All of our work is connected through this. Each element has its own focus.

TL's Hotline offers fully anonymous and confidential peer support through live calls, callback or email.

SIGNIFICANT OTHERS, FRIENDS, FAMILY, & ALLIES

Started in 2018, TL's SOFFA line is intentioned to offer a more equitable and reasonably impactful support to our community.

It is a line that works slightly differently from the main Hotline, where callers are noted, and contacted by a volunteer afterward to talk more.

Since its start, the service has been updated to offer support via email, rather than callback. SOFFA allows us to hold care and support as a system.

SPANISH LANGUAGE SERVICES

In 2020, TL's Hotline Department sought out to meet a need that was being overlooked in our practice.

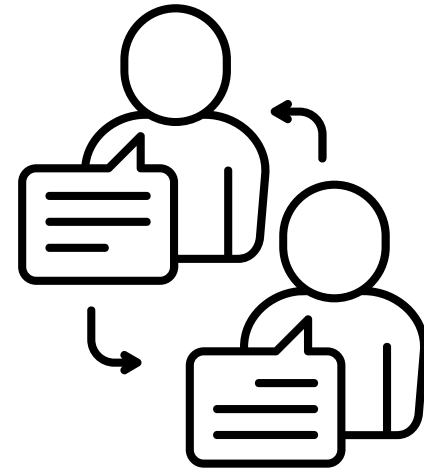
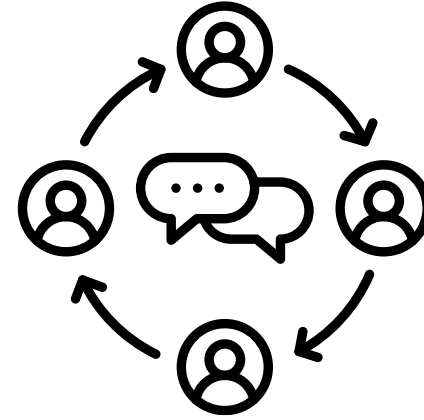
To increase our accessibility, and be more aligned with our principle to prioritize community over cops and policing.

Since its start, the service has been able to reach up to 420 contacts, and has grown to become at least 1% of all calls.

TRANS LIFELINE'S INFORMED CONSENT

Informed consent occurs when a caller asks an operator to call emergency services and the appropriate agency responds to the caller.

At TL when this happens, operators inform callers of the risks of police involvement. Callers confirm with operators through a series of yes/no questions, and operators receive support to contact state agencies. While this happens operators stay connected to callers.



MANDATORY REPORTING

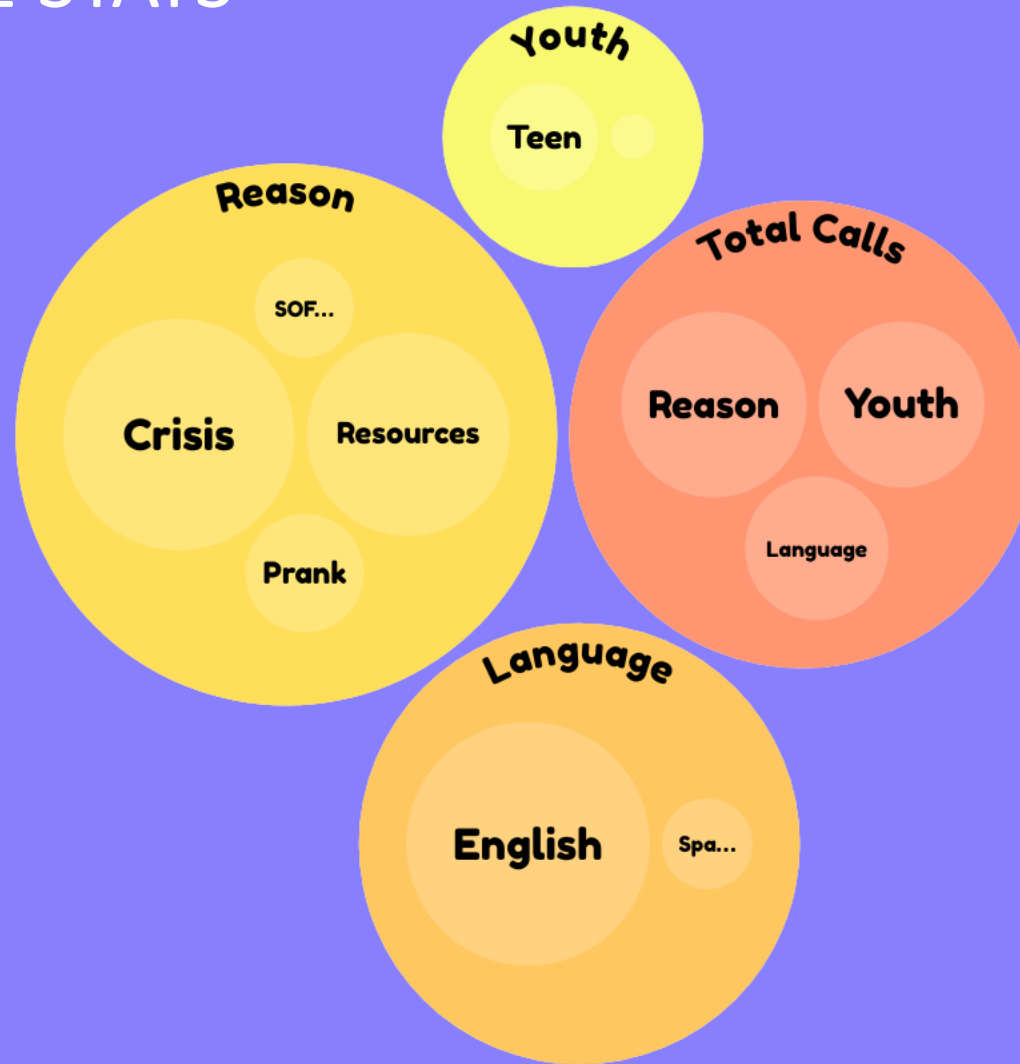
It is in our vision to work towards a world free of police and prisons. Being based in CA, and being an anonymous hotline, we have been able to engage The Good Samaritan Law, and avoid activating MR laws.

This is a law that protects one from civil liability when you act in good faith, not seeking compensation, to render emergency medical or non-medical care at the scene of an emergency.

At Trans Lifeline our approach to serving the community has been organized in such a way, that it gives space for principles like Autonomy & Self-Determination to exist in our practice.



2023 HOTLINE STATS



8,947

**Calls
Answered**



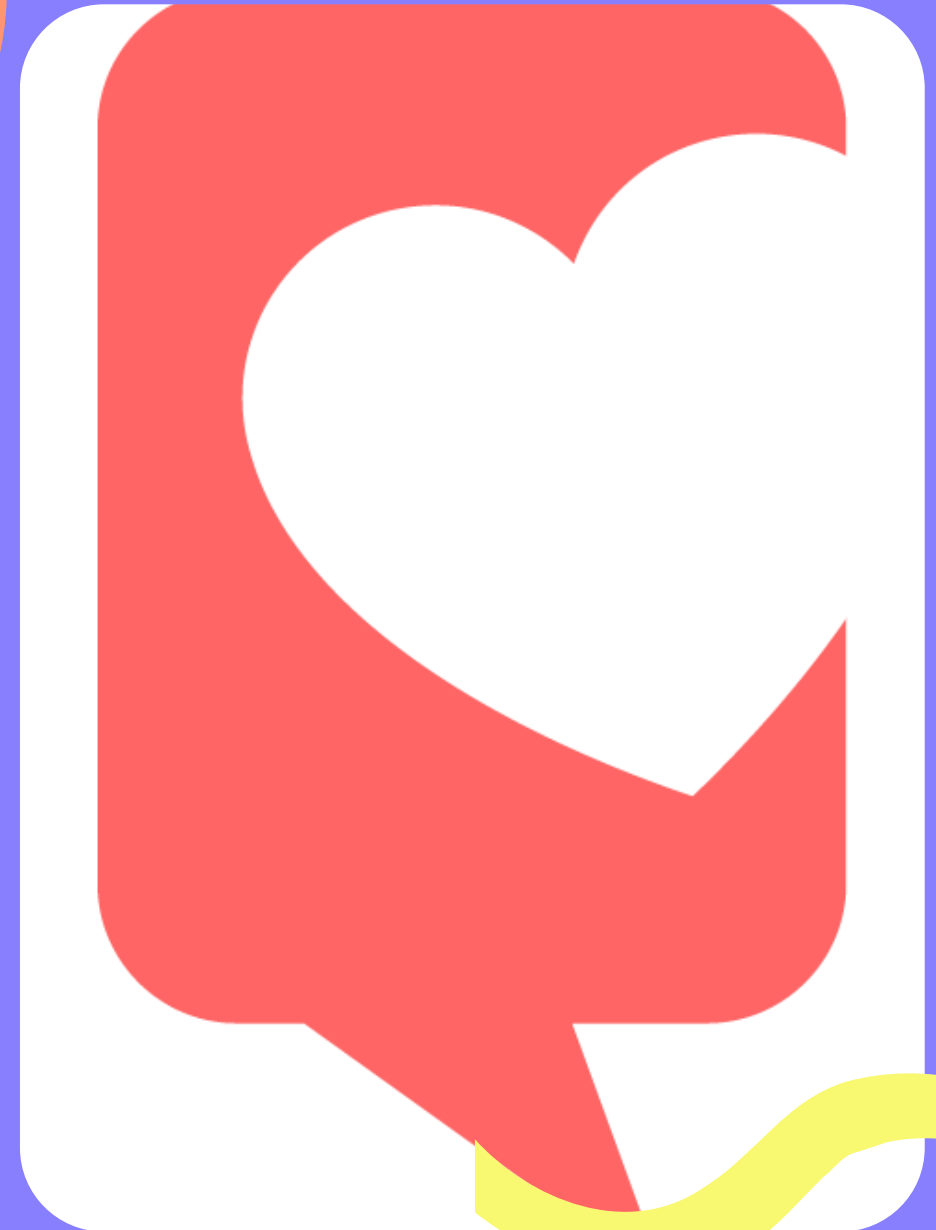
As an anonymous hotline these are not exact statistics and do indicate information that has been volunteered by our callers.

ABOUT SAFE HOTLINES

Trans Lifeline launched its #SafeHotlines campaign in spring of 2023.

The focus of #SafeHotlines is to:

- Educate on the need for community-based services
- Educate on current hotline policies and practices
- Advocate for transparent and caller-centered hotline practices
- Inform providers and policy makers of trans-specific impacts when accessing crisis services
- Build power to increase community-based services





OUR STUDY ON HOTLINE INTERVENTIONS

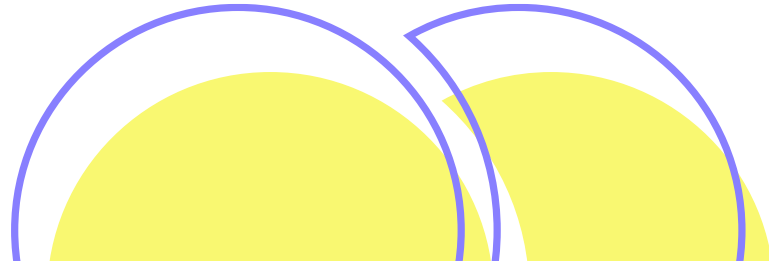
What happens to hotline callers after the call ends?

We surveyed over 200 people, and interviewed 25, who identified as having experienced a mental health crisis in the past 5 years.

We asked participants what crisis resources have been helpful or harmful, their views and experiences with hotlines, and the impact of interventions that occurred as a result of calling a hotline.

A report on our findings and recommendations will be released in May.

Some key themes:

- Frustrations with the risk assessment process including uncertainty about the consequences of answering questions truthfully and/or assessments detracted from the effectiveness of the conversation.
 - Concerns about data and privacy, leading to taking precautionary measures to mitigate risks
 - Needs for more peer and community support that frames the caller/help seeker as the leader and expert
- 

THE ROLE OF IDENTITY ON CRISIS HOTLINES

“Having this, like, feeling of anticipation that someone's not gonna understand different identities ... [it] does lead to dishonesty and does lead to kinda like a hopelessness. When reaching out that someone's not gonna actually get what my concerns are.”

“I definitely feel like I can't call mainstream—like, typical, mainstream crisis lines because there's always something I'm gonna have to explain to somebody.”

“wouldn't it be nice if you could select someone who was reflective of your background, right? And just know that that someone could potentially understand or empathize with your situation 'cause even if a place says, “Yes, we're queer friendly,” or whatever the case may be, everyone has their biases or internalized issues that come out.”

“all the operators being trans, I think I will say that I can't really imagine calling other hotlines because I feel very, like, you know, I don't wanna hafta explain a lot of the stuff that's going on with me. ...It's not always like every trans person is going to understand everything that I'm going through, but, I think there's, like, at least a little bit of a shared context.”

“there were times where I felt like those [hotline counselors] were the only trans people that I knew, you know? Um, or could talk to ... there were times where I felt like I was like—I don't know how to explain it other than I felt like I was at the end of my life. [...] And I think just being able to talk to trans people on the phone made me feel like there's like a world of possibilities.”

Quote sources: Safe Hotlines Interviews (not available to the public)

TRANS-SPECIFIC RISKS WHEN CONNECTING WITH SYSTEMS



- **Outing trans youth to unsupportive guardians:** 27.3% of trans youth who lacked supportive parents have actively attempted suicide. Being outed can lead to unsafe housing or homelessness.
- Hospitalized trans people report a **lack of access to gender-affirming care, medication, and resources.** Denying trans-affirming healthcare to trans patients often leads to psychological harm, including suicidality.
- A history of **involuntary psychiatric hospitalization can be used to** deny trans people the ability to give informed **consent to trans-affirming surgery or hormones in the future.**
- **Assigning trans people to the wrong gender unit** in jails, prisons, psychiatric units, and detention centers

Source: Safe Hotlines' Fact Sheet: Crisis Hotlines & Transgender Callers
<https://translifeline.org/safe-hotlines/fact-sheet/>

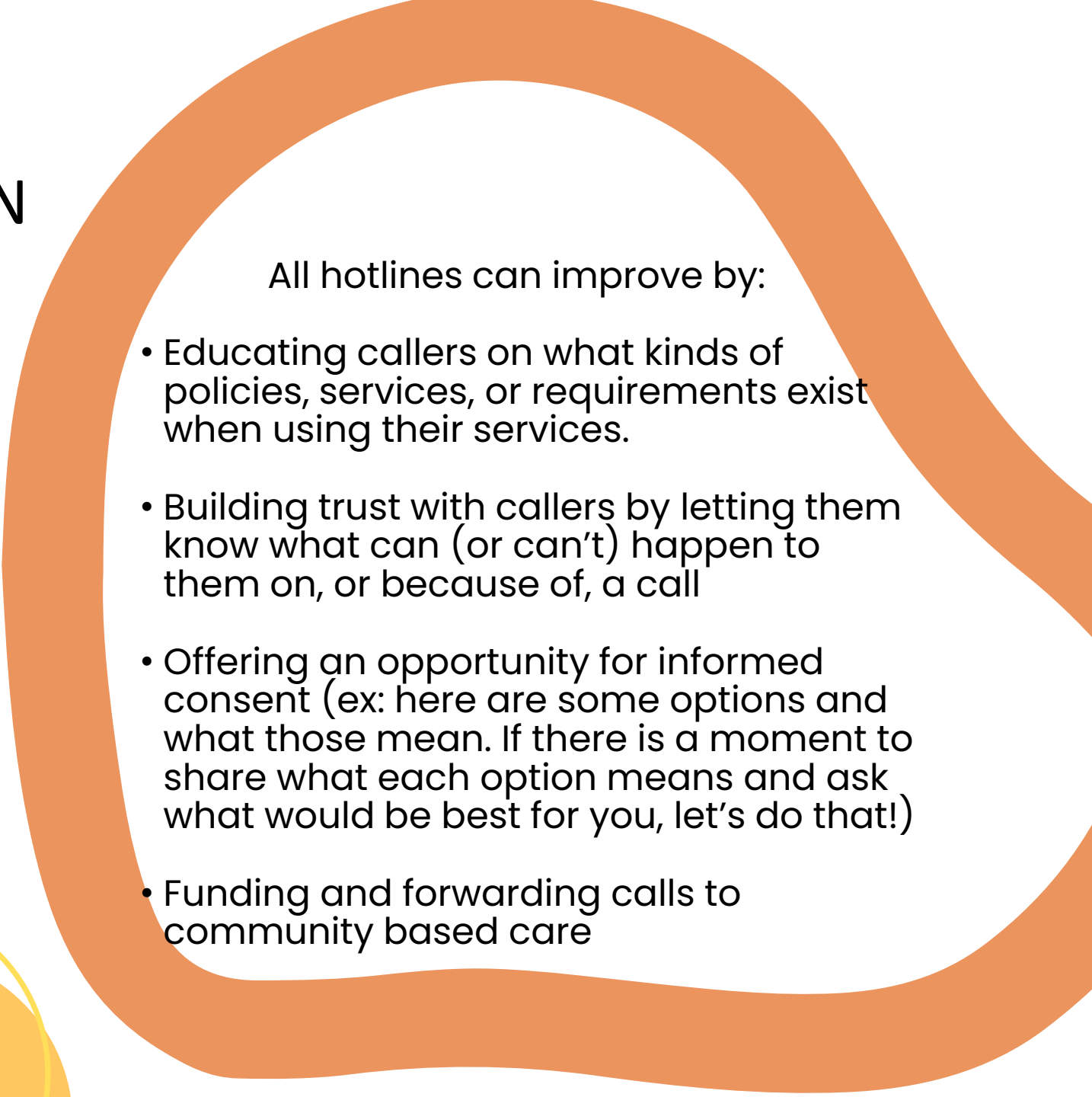



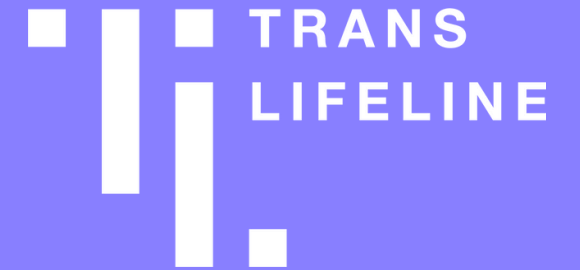
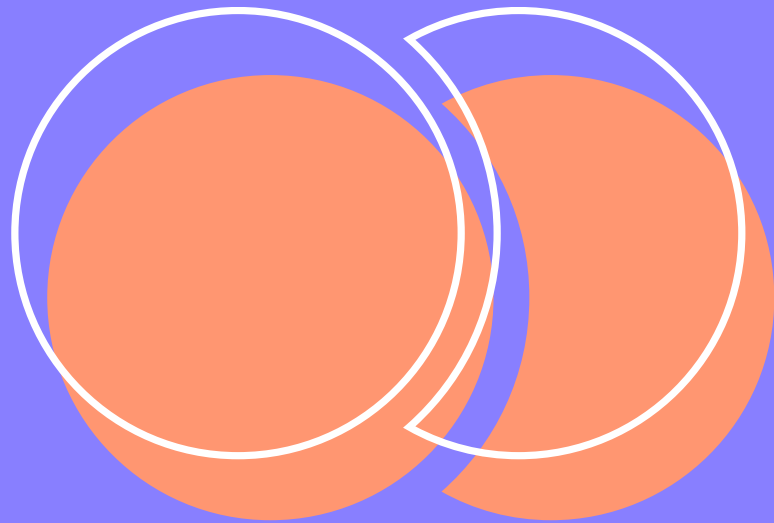
INCREASING PEER-RUN OPPORTUNITIES

Our hotline is one of several examples of how it's possible to fund, certify, and offer caller-centered crisis support.

Together we can advocate for improved transparency for callers, funding, and routing to community and peer-based services.

All hotlines can improve by:

- Educating callers on what kinds of policies, services, or requirements exist when using their services.
 - Building trust with callers by letting them know what can (or can't) happen to them on, or because of, a call
 - Offering an opportunity for informed consent (ex: here are some options and what those mean. If there is a moment to share what each option means and ask what would be best for you, let's do that!)
 - Funding and forwarding calls to community based care
- 
- 



KEEP IN TOUCH!

Visit us at <https://translifeline.org>

Follow us on socials
@translifeline and @safehotlines

Thank You



Brownsville In Violence Out

MEET THE PROGRAM

Brownsville In Violence Out (BIVO) is the name of our anti-gun violence initiative serving the 73rd police precinct of Brownsville Brooklyn.

We are part of the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice Crisis Management System.

<https://camba.org/programs/brownsville-in-violence-out/>

MEET THE MANAGERS

Darien “Mello” Scriven



Dushoun “Bigga” Almond



WHAT WE DO

- Identify violently injured youth (ages 16-25) at risk for retaliatory gun violence
- Work with these young people, their families, friends, and local community to help prevent future gun violence
- Provide participants supportive services, including job training, employment, legal services, therapeutic services, and school conflict mediation



OUR GOAL

Our goal at BIVO is to use the Cure Violence model, an evidence-based public health anti-violence program, to prevent and reduce the occurrence of shooting incidents and prevent violence-related injuries and fatalities among youth in communities with high incidence of violence.

CURE VIOLENCE MODEL

1. Detect potentially violent events and interrupt them to prevent violence through trained credible messengers
2. Provide ongoing behavior change and support to the highest-risk individuals through trained credible messengers
3. Change community norms that allow, encourage and exacerbate violence in chronically violent neighborhoods to healthy norms that reject the use of violence

CURE VIOLENCE MODEL (con't)

4. Continually analyze data to ensure proper implementation and identify changes in violence
5. Provide training and technical assistance to workers, program managers and implementing agency covering the necessary skills to implement the model correctly

VIOLENCE INTERRUPTERS

Violence Interrupters are Credible Messengers, because:

- They have been involved in and/or exposed to gun violence in their lives
- They are from Brownsville

Violence Interrupters are the heart of our street outreach

- They go directly into the community to reduce potential conflicts and to interrupt violence through active, on-the-spot conflict mediation

PARTNERING WITH NYPD

Several times a year, the police redirect 911 calls from a 2-block area in Brownsville to BIVO workers.

Unless there is a major incident or a victim demands an arrest, officers (always in plainclothes) shadow BIVO workers.

NYPD Violent Crime Trends

- **2023 73rd Precinct Data – Compared to 2022**
 - Shooting Victims – Down 39.2%
 - Shooting Incidents – Down 30.2%
 - Murders – Down 68.2%
 - Felony Assault – Down 4.7%
- **2023 Shootings in Catchment – Compared to 2022**
 - **BIVO South**
 - **Murders in 2023: 0 (Down 100%)**
 - **Victims in 2023: 5 (Down 58%)**
 - **Incidents in 2023: 4 (Down 63.6%)**
 - Murders in 2022: 4
 - Victims in 2022: 12
 - Incidents in 2022: 11

Source: NYPD Database



❖ **BIVO Staff supporting CCD. Community Capacity Development (CCD) is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering growth and healing in historically disenfranchised communities dealing with issues related to gun violence, food injustice, mass incarcerations, substandard housing, etc.**



❖ “Ubuntu” is an ancient African word meaning ‘humanity to others.’ It is often described as reminding us that “I am what I am because of who we all are.”

The five core values are:

- Survival
- Spirit of solidarity
- Compassion
- Respect
- Dignity

How We Help Our Community



Basketball Tournaments



Mentoring

Annual Summer Basketball Tournaments



- ❖ We recruit young adults from the neighborhood to participate in basketball tournaments. We do this every so often to develop the youth's mindset and shift their focus from the negativity happening on the streets. The matches are also a platform to provide young players with an opportunity to develop their skills and enjoy the sport. Our focus is on personal growth and teamwork.

Sonny Lewis Memorial Game



- ❖ **The Sonny Lewis All-Star Memorial Basketball Tournament. Family, friends and supporters observed the tournament in memory of Sonny. There was a lot of food, fun and festivities.**

Who we do it for.. Our Youth.



❖ We desire to have an impact on our youth by simply just being available. When we show up and show out, our community is sure to reciprocate that energy. We do this to help the participants achieve a level of self-confidence and resilience that will help them reach their full potential.



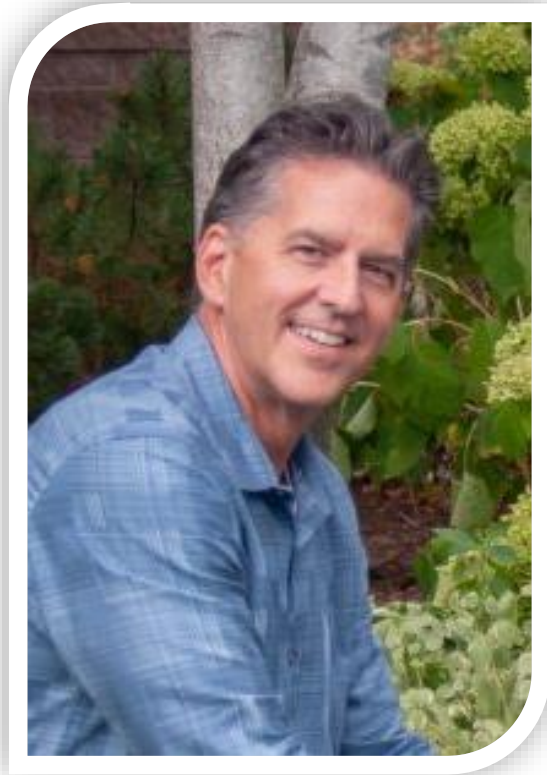
- ❖ Free haircuts sponsored by BSA (Brownsville Safety Alliance). BSA works with local partners to identify areas experiencing gun violence and chronic quality of life conditions.

Making the News; Making a Difference



People USA: Rose Houses

Introduction



Steve Miccio
People USA
Chief Executive Officer
smiccio@people-usa.org



People USA is a peer-run mental health nonprofit that creates, provides, and promotes innovative crisis response and wellness services for people with serious emotional disturbances





Rose House – A Peer Respite

24/7/365 short-term crisis respites that are comfortable home-like environments.

- Services offered: Peer Support and Engagement, Recovery and Wellness Education, Solution Planning, Wellness Activities, 24/7 Warm Line, Linkages to needed resources
- They are 100% operated by peers who have their own personal lived experiences.
- Currently, we operate 4 houses serving 6 New York Counties.



We have helped open 42 Crisis Respites using the Rose House model.

Testimonial

"A female guest came to stay at the Rose House after she was kicked out of her home due to challenges with substance use. At the time, she was residing with her significant other and was estranged from her family, not having spoken to her parents, siblings, or children for years. It was the holiday season when she came to the Rose House, and she was feeling lonely and upset about her current life circumstances. While at the House, the guest built a rapport with staff and discussed her substance use and the effects it had on her family.

People USA staff provided compassionate care and support while the guest developed goals for herself, including working on her personal relationships. She decided that she wanted to reconnect with her family and sent a group text message, which helped with her determination to continue to work on herself and her substance use.

She decided to explore long-term rehab to try to address her substance use; however, she became resistant the day she was supposed to be admitted and stated she would rather go to the shelter in Westchester County instead. On the ride to the shelter, our peer staff engaged her on this decision, leading to her changing her mind and checking into long-term rehab at Samaritan Village in Jamaica Queens, NY. People USA's peer continued to support the guest, driving her to rehab and remaining as she checked in. The guest reported her commitment to working on her wellness and re-establishing relationships with her family."

Impact

\$1.4
MILLION



Hospital diversions by
Rose House



MORE THAN
\$8,000+
CALLS

8,869 Warm line calls in FY23

5, 
PEOPLE

An average of 500 people served per year
with over 600 stays

Source: PeopleUSA, 2022 Report to the Community, <https://people-usa.org/2022-report-to-the-community/>

EXAMPLES OF HOW TO PAY FOR PEER SERVICES

- ▶ **Federal/State:** Medicaid
- ▶ **Federal:** American Rescue Plan, SAMHSA
- ▶ **State:** Appropriations, Taxes, Bonds
- ▶ **City:** Social Impact Bonds
- ▶ **Also:** Indian Health Service (IHS), private sources

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION