

CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

PHD Completion Seminar The University of Melbourne

Caller's Experience of Lifeline and Its Impact in Their Lives

Presenter: Alan Woodward

Supervisors:

**Prof. Jane Pirkis, Prof. Louise Keogh
and
Prof. Jane Gunn**

**Wednesday 3 August 2022
10.00am - 11.00am**

Via Zoom

**[https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/86816323361?
pwd=MSStxaG5GM2lxUUhmRlhyK1BMQUYxUT09](https://unimelb.zoom.us/j/86816323361?pwd=MSStxaG5GM2lxUUhmRlhyK1BMQUYxUT09)**

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Alan Woodward is a PhD Candidate at the Centre for Mental Health. He has worked on policy and program development in mental health and suicide prevention for more than 20 years, including the provision of advice to governments.

He has in depth experience of crisis lines through senior positions he held over 14 years at Lifeline Australia and with international crisis lines networks. His research interests have included tele-web services, community-based suicide prevention and suicide aftercare.

He holds a Masters Degree in Policy Studies (Social Science), a Bachelor of Business (Public Administration) and Diploma in Arts (Communications).

Despite an estimated 1,000 crisis lines worldwide, few studies have explored the phenomenology of crisis line use. Less is known, accordingly, about the reasons people choose to call a crisis line, or about the experiences of those who call during and after calls.

This Thesis reports a study of the experiences of callers to a national crisis line, Lifeline. The study involved 140 semi-structured interviews with 58 callers to Lifeline, over 12 months. A thematic framework was developed from the analysis of the interview data. The research findings were considered against theoretical constructs surrounding crisis lines and existing research literature.

The study found that the call to Lifeline de-escalated a caller's crisis state and, in some cases, prevented loss of life. However, it also found that many people called Lifeline on multiple occasions, using these calls to cope with difficulties over time. Calls to Lifeline were also beneficial for some in helping them to take steps towards improvements in their lives. The importance of the befriending interaction for callers to Lifeline was reinforced in the findings of this study.

These seminars are free. Visitors are welcome to attend.
For more information contact the Centre for Mental Health +61 3 8344 0908