

# UNIVERSITY

## Helpline aids troubled students

Problems? Help is only a phone call away on Helpline

By Meg Dedolph  
Emerald Contributor

Students and staff taking calls at the University Crisis Center Helpline hear it all.

"We're someone to call and talk to about anything because it's anonymous," said Helpline co-director Nancy Kemp.

"Students sometimes call when they find themselves away from home for the first time and realize that their home life wasn't like everyone else's," she said. "They may have had a dysfunctional family, or an alcoholic parent."

"We also talk to people who want to get their emotions out but wouldn't find it safe otherwise — if they're angry at a professor, for example."

Many people who call are worrying about a relationship or a friend, or are depressed, while others suffer from eating disorders or have been sexually abused. In some cases, callers are referred to other places for additional counseling and help, because the Helpline is primarily an intervention service.

The problems that the Helpline encounters range from relationship problems with family or partners, to loneliness, academic problems or anxiety over money, jobs or grades.

Co-director Karin Nilsson said most of the calls the crisis center receives deal with relationship issues, possibly because of the callers' age group.

"A lot of people who call with relationship problems start apologizing for calling us, but we're here for people with all kinds of problems, not just suicide and things like that, but ones that are less critical," Nilsson said.

The Helpline also serves as a resource for people wanting to help friends with problems, Kemp said, for example, R.A.'s concerned about people living in their dorms.

"I don't think people think of us that way," she said, "that we can help them intervene for a friend. The staff is really familiar with what's helpful to do with others, and we can give support to people trying to help others."

The Crisis Center also sponsors the Crisis Prevention Conference in the spring. This one-day workshop is open to students and community members and drew more than 270 participants last year to hear speakers on stress management, depression and shyness, among other topics.



Photo by Andre Ranieri

Crisis Center Helpline staff take calls from students with a wide range of problems, 24 hours a day.

The Helpline is staffed by 12 crisis counselors, and has two co-directors, a newly-added publicity coordinator, and a coordinator for the Crisis Prevention Conference. Currently, the Helpline is in the process of

adding more people to staff the lines.

At 346-4488, Helpline callers can phone in 24 hours a day.

The responsibilities of the

Turn to **HELPLINE**, Page 8

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By GARY LARSON



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