

RESEARCH INTO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON CHIDLIN GAUTENG CRISIS LINE

Edited version of the powerpoint presentation given to Childline South Africa head office by Lynne Cawood, Director Childline Gauteng

IN ORDER to gain a better understanding of the extent of satisfaction of children and adults with concerns about children who contact the crisis line in their time of need, as well as identify the strength and weaknesses of the services, the Childline Gauteng office recently completed research into their crisis line with great results.

Telephone interviews were conducted with a group of people who had called the Childline Gauteng crisis line for assistance, between February and July 2008, and whose calls were classified as "cases". Names of people to be contacted for the research were gathered through the crisis line by counsellors after they were guaranteed confidentiality and told that they were not compelled to participate and they would be called on a separate occasion.

Overall, more than 300 people who had given correct contact information were interviewed. Following is a description of the participating callers:

Age: The youngest caller in the survey was nine years of age. The callers were younger, on average than the average of the population of the country aged nine years or more.

Highest level of education: The callers were more educated, on average than the general public of South Africa in the same age category.

Home language: Almost three in every 10 (27,9%) were IsiZulu speakers. Almost one in five (18,0%) were Setswana speakers.

Population group: Almost nine in every ten callers (87,3%) was an African. This is a higher proportion than the percentage of Africans in the relevant age category in the population as a whole (78,3%).

Sex of the caller: About one in four callers (23,8%) were male, while approximately three quarters (76,2%) were female.

As in most research conducted, the researcher highlighted the following limitations:

- The sample consists of those willing to participate.
- It does not meet the criteria of a probability sample of callers with serious problems seeking assistance from Childline.
- There may be selection bias.

The findings of the study need to be regarded as exploratory. They cannot be generalised to the various people who call Childline helpline for assistance, and whose issues are classified as cases.

In spite of these limitations, it was noted that the information gathered from participants may be regarded as indicative, but not representative, of the attitude of callers to the assistance they received from the crisis line of Childline.

Overall satisfaction

In general, people who participated in the survey were very satisfied with the service they received from the crisis line of Childline Gauteng. More than 95% of respondents were positive about their experiences when contacting the crisis line.

The lowest average score for satisfaction with the service (6,5 on a 10 point scale starting at zero) and concerned the extent to which the participating callers perceived that the counsellor got to know them as a person.

The highest average score was obtained on the extent to which the callers felt that the call was actually worthwhile (7,2 on the 10 point scale).

Conclusions

Although Childline Gauteng cannot generalize these findings to all callers who have their problems classified as cases on the crisis line, the main conclusion that can be drawn is Childline Gauteng is offering a very useful and supportive service to those callers who participated in the survey, at a time of their lives when they are facing a crisis.

While general relationship-building skills are good among the counsellors, there is room for improvement but there is little doubt that the counsellors are to be congratulated on their empathy and their knowledge of the available services to assist people when facing a crisis.