

April 2011

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Upcoming Events

DCO Visioning and Planning Day

May 2, 2011
Hilton Hotel and Suites
Niagara Falls, ON

1-800-suicideOntario Preparation and Planning Crisis Chat.org

Program Review
May 3, 2011
Hilton Hotel and Suites
Niagara Falls, ON

Working effectively with Challenging Callers

Webinars
4 Wednesdays in
May starting May 4, 2011

Staff and Leader's Development

Building True Consensus
Webinar
June, 2011

New content each month

Above and Beyond Ideation

It is important to the Distress Centres Ontario to inform our members about new research in the distress field, and the recent American Association of Suicidology poster presentation, **Differentiating Suicide Attempters from Suicide Ideators: A Review of the Literature** by Alexis M. May and E. David Klonsky at the University of British Columbia, is one such piece of relevant research.



The study's researchers wondered what factors differentiate the small number of suicide attempters from the much larger group of suicide ideators, and found that identifying specific factors to predict suicide attempts beyond ideation is important for risk-assessment, clinical decision-making, and the development of sound theoretical models of suicide.

The study found that "most of the generally accepted risk factors for suicidality are not useful in predicting attempts among people who are already thinking about suicide." In predicting attempts over ideation, the risk factors identified in the study show that recent, as opposed to a lifetime of **stress**, plays a role, **physical illness** may be more strongly related to attempt over ideation than previously thought, **physical and sexual abuse**, and the presence of a **gun** in the home.

For youth, the presence of substance use issues, disruptive disorders, recent stressful events, and knowing suicidal friends were variables, and for adults, "female gender and borderline personality disorder were the only variables associated with attempts over ideation that were replicated."

To examine these and further variables likely to predict suicide attempts among ideators (measures of acquired capability, for example), further research is needed. However, for those parties interested in reading this poster presentation material further, please [contact](#) the DCO offices for a copy of the study.

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on www.learningforums.ca!
Get a password through your
volunteer coordinator.

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Bridging the Gap

Continuing with the series highlighting the four demographic groups studied in Volunteer Canada's pan-Canadian research study, **Bridging the Gap**, we bring you information about **Baby Boomers** this month, to understand who they are, how to draw them into a rewarding volunteer experience, and how to keep them coming back.

Boomers are the most loyal of all examined groups. They seek purpose and meaningful engagement in their volunteer work. Baby Boomers bring wisdom and skills to the volunteer table and like to take on projects that they can "own". Boomers like to work independently and like activities outside of their daily routine and are driven by cause.



The study noted that with their varied language skills, immigrant seniors could be very helpful to integrate new Canadians to the country and to Canadian society.

Seniors have their goals and are often natural leaders at their organizations. Having gathered wisdom throughout their lives, are able to mentor other volunteers to pass on skills.

Though this group is the most loyal and serves the most hours of any other demographic, offer Boomers short-term opportunities to try out your organization before they commit, and match their skills to their volunteer tasks and acknowledge their experience and their skill-set - they'll appreciate it.

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The Importance of Emotional Support for Volunteers

In her [blog](#), Jayne Cravens, MSc, describes the importance of providing emotional support for volunteers who work in high-stress areas and can face feelings of isolation, fear, and being overwhelmed in their roles.



"Escape hatches" help volunteers deal with high-stress roles.

Volunteers in areas such as working with rape victims, abandoned animals, victims of crime, or in emergency services, risk burnout and the agencies

they volunteer for risk sub-par volunteer service if they do not provide adequate mental and emotional health support for their volunteers. The goal is to provide support to relieve stress, address emotional conflicts, and help volunteers to balance their work, family, and social lives with their volunteer activity.

To this end, Cravens suggests creating an online curriculum for these volunteers, offering "a great assignment for someone looking for an internship as a part of their university studies, a retired human resources professional looking to volunteer for a limited task at your organization, someone who wants a project that will look great on their résumé."

Part of this online curriculum to support volunteers' health and mental well-being is to list community resources such as faith communities, debt counselling services, exercise clubs and facilities, senior centres, and health clinics.

Along with the curriculum, she also suggests offering volunteers a resource list of free or low-cost "escape hatches" to give them a chance to relax and recharge in places like local parks, nearby theatres, spas, golf courses, museums, and the like. There may even be ways to negotiate volunteer discounts with these organizations to better support volunteers. Be sure to include maps and transportation options to further encourage volunteer engagement with these outlets.

Providing services such as these sends a stellar message of recognition to volunteers, letting them know that they are valued, that the stress of their work is acknowledged, and that their organization is concerned about them and their well-being.

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**Congratulations to the 2011 Spirit of Volunteerism
Award nominees!**

Distress Centres Ontario would like to congratulate all volunteers for their time and passionate commitment to the distress line movement this year.



During National Volunteer Week, April 10 - 16, 2011, DCO celebrated the Spirit of Volunteerism Award nominees with a special Provincial Recognition of Distress Centre Volunteers e-News + Views edition, and created a film featuring information and photographs of our amazing nominees.

Please join us in congratulating our 2011 recipients and nominees of the Spirit of Volunteerism Award, given in memory of Rev. Chad Varah!

Recipients

Sheila Boocock: Distress Centre Oakville
Victoria Freeman: TALK Kingston
John M Harper: Toronto Distress Centres
Carol Thompson: Toronto North Branch

Nominees

Enayat Amiri: TDC Scarborough Branch
Russell Baker: Community Torchlight
Adam Booth: Toronto Distress Centres
Kay Burke: Distress Centre Peel
Beth Carr: Distress Centre Durham
Caitlin Dollar: Distress Centre Windsor
John Freeman: TALK Kingston
Dominic Mitges: Community Torchlight
Madeleine Staffieri: Community Torchlight
Nick Taptelis: Distress Centre Peel

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