



Mission: To be an association that is the recognized leader in promotion, collaboration, and building capacity within organizations that provide distress and crisis response.

Vision: To foster an environment of collaboration and networking while providing universal access to support for individuals in distress and crisis.

Distress and Crisis Ontario

Spirit of Volunteerism Committee

Volunteer Skills Refresher

Webinar Notes

Held VIA Zoom
September 21, 2022

Hosted by Neta Gear, Executive Director of Distress and Crisis Ontario (DCO), and presented by Caitlin Plant, Program Manger at DCO.

As DCO is in the process of uploading additional content to the Learning Forum for Member centre staff and volunteers, DCO shared an abbreviated version of an upcoming module on Volunteer Skills with webinar attendees to both provide a refresher on some important skills and give a preview of the upcoming content.

To begin, Neta Gear introduced herself and the webinar's presenter, Caitlin Plant, then asked attendees to introduce themselves and share a little bit about how they are doing. Attendees shared some challenges being faced at their centres, as well as some successes, and then the presentation began. To view a recording of the presentation, [click here](#).

Following the presentation there was some discussion, shared below.

Question 1: Can you suggest more de-escalation techniques for managing difficult calls where callers are insulting responders?

Response: Neta Gear shared that, firstly, it is important to take care of oneself as a responder, know what your triggers are, and set good habits in place to practice valuable self-care and mindfulness. She also mentioned that it is important to understand scope of practice and how to appropriately reach out for help with challenging callers. Neta gave a recent example from an interaction on the ONTX help line where police services were called in for support with a young individual who was exhibiting problematic behaviour and the call resulted in charges being laid against the young person. This was not the intent of the ONTX responder who reached out for help, and when the young person continued to seek support, they approached things differently, leading to a more positive response. They were honest about the challenges of supporting their current behaviour and, as a result, the young person was open with them in a way they had not been before.

* ACCOUNTABILITY * COLLABORATION AND EMPOWERMENT * INCLUSION * INTEGRITY * LEADERSHIP *

PO Box 40115 RPO Waterloo Square Waterloo, ON N2J 4V1

Phone: 416-486-2242 / email: info@dcontario.org / www.dcontario.org

Additionally, a previous webinar speaker shared that a feelings wheel can be useful in helping people pinpoint where their emotions are coming from. A good one can be found [here](#). You can use the wheel to ask a caller, “where does this anger seem to be coming from”, which may redirect their emotions. When callers continue to be difficult it can be effective for volunteers to say, “You are beginning to make me feel uncomfortable, if you cannot change the tone of your voice, I will need to end the call.” If this doesn’t work, give them one more chance to change their behaviour, and then disengage. For more information on ending difficult calls, you can see past webinar notes [here](#) and [here](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us by email at info@dcontario.org.