



CRISIS LINE AWARENESS WEEK

MARCH 20 – 26, 2011

One Year of Service for the Vancouver Island Crisis Line

1-888-494-3888

Vancouver Island Crisis Line - one number for the whole Island – after one year has passed, we take a look back at the successful transition. Change can be difficult but sometimes it can bring forth new possibilities. The crisis line service was challenged to make it through a difficult time of transition. The way things had been done for 40 years had to be re-examined, reshaped and streamlined to give all residents of Vancouver Island consistency in service, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with public access to mental health professionals in their communities.

The new one number service – 1-888-494-3888 started its transition last March by accepting calls from the Courtenay area and slowly transitioned until finally accepting calls from all areas of Vancouver Island including Victoria by the end of June. To date the new service has received approximately 32,000 calls with our busiest day seeing 155 calls answered.

Up until this time the local numbers being used by callers have been automatically forwarded into the new number seamlessly. We have been very busy distributing promotional materials announcing the new number so that we can feel confident that the public will know where to call when the local numbers are no longer in use. Even still there will be a message on the local crisis line numbers advising callers of the new one access number. This distribution of promotional materials included updates to every school on Vancouver Island. The new number is also listed next to 911 in your local phone directories. There has been an Island wide news campaign including newspaper and radio ads run in September of 2010, January 2011 and again this week during Crisis Line Awareness Week. With the help of all our VIHA partner agencies such as Mental Health & Addictions and other major community resources such as the Ministry of Children & Family we feel confident that the materials are getting into the hands of those more vulnerable callers that can benefit from the ongoing support of the crisis lines.

Our main message is that anyone who feels overwhelmed with their circumstances should pick up the phone and give us a call. We can all get to that point sometimes in our lives so don't wait until you feel that your options are running out and you have nowhere to turn. We have non-judgmental, empathetic, caring people that are willing to listen and provide encouragement. Sometimes, that kind of support is all that someone needs in order to make it through a difficult time in their life. It takes courage to reach out and admit that you need help but it is the best choice you can make for yourself. So why not give us a call, 1-888-494-3888.