



Crisis Intervention of Houston, Inc.

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NEW CRISIS INTERVENTION *TALKLINE* DEBUTS FOR FORT BEND MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

***Crisis Intervention of Houston provides first student hotline program;
free, confidential 24/7 service offers new resource for counseling***

A first-of-its-kind proprietary student services program for crisis intervention and counseling is now available to middle and high school students of the Fort Bend Independent School District (FBISD) through a collaboration between the district and Crisis Intervention of Houston (CIH). Introduced for the 2008 – 2009 school year, *TalkLine* is a free telephone hotline number dedicated to FBISD students and operated by Crisis Intervention of Houston (CIH) to provide confidential and immediate crisis counseling and referrals to community resources 24-hours a day, seven days a week by calling 281-240-TALK (8255).

“Fort Bend ISD is a progressive district that is providing students an additional resource to help them address the difficulties they may be facing,” said Shaun Lester, Ph.D., director of programs for CIH. “We believe *TalkLine* is a model program for other districts to evaluate as a means of helping troubled teens in a new way that is completely confidential and as accessible as their cell phones.”

While individual callers and the specifics of their situation are kept completely confidential from the school district, CIH provides the district with a summary report on the number and types of crisis calls it receives. The information allows the district to consider whether new behavioral, social or emotional development programs are needed in the schools.

“This program has great potential to help students who may be reluctant to reach out to other services or programs offered by the school district,” said Bob Conlon, Ph.D., director of student support services at FBISD. “The *TalkLine* was reviewed and recommended by the district’s School Health Advisory Council and provides our students with immediate access to counseling services in a non-threatening and anonymous way.”

Bilingual CIH volunteers answer the hotline and calls can be translated in 165 languages through the use of AT&T’s language translation service.

“Our volunteer counselors are trained to address any type of crisis situation,” said Lester.

Based on CIH’s experience in answering calls to the organization’s *TeenLine*, Lester anticipates calls to the *TalkLine* will be related to alcohol and drugs, depression, school violence, eating disorders, pregnancy, peer pressure and other youth-oriented problems. CIH receives more than 200 calls per day from individuals across the greater Houston area.

The *TalkLine* program is funded by the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities grant acquired by the FBISD Student Support Services Department and will be evaluated for continuation after this school year. The district will promote the *TalkLine* number on middle and high school student identification cards. It also will distribute fliers and make school announcements about the service. Conlon plans to engage middle and high school students to deliver public service announcements on the district’s in-school television network to promote the program.

“This type of program provides our students with positive intervention for any type of situation that confronts them,” said Conlon. “We just want to help our young people.”

About CIH

Crisis Hotline and *TalkLine* are operated by Crisis Intervention of Houston, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to helping people in crisis. A United Way agency, CIH also provides hotline services to National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, La Rosa Family Services, Ft. Bend Independent School District, Texas Southern University and Coalition for the Homeless Houston. The organization provides a variety of other educational and outreach programs to help people and communities recover from crisis.

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TalkLine

281-240-Talk (8255)

A Helpline dedicated to the
needs of our students.

