

The Methodology of Romanian Crisis Hotlines: The Possibilities of a Self-Healing Society in the Age of AI

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Abstract

Mental health crises are a global challenge today, especially in post-pandemic societies, where telephone crisis hotlines play a key role in both prevention and intervention. This research examines more than a decade of operation of the Romanian Telephone Love Service, a pioneering organization in this field, focusing on the methodological framework of crisis hotlines.

Our objective is to analyze the dynamics of request-offer in volunteer-based systems, with a particular focus on promoting self-healing and the potential for integrating artificial intelligence (AI). Using qualitative and quantitative methods (interviews, call logs, efficiency indicators), we analyzed over 2,500 cases from the last 17 years, revealing how social context shapes telephone interactions.

Our results confirm the high effectiveness of crisis hotlines: conversations led by volunteers facilitated self-healing in 78% of cases, while AI-based triage procedures are expected to further reduce waiting times in certain cases. The balance between offering and requesting help is key to strengthening social cohesion, but it also raises ethical dilemmas about the possible replacement of human empathy by AI.

The research contributes to the sociological discourse on the social modeling of mental health and makes recommendations for scalable volunteer models. From an interdisciplinary perspective, it emphasizes the role of crisis hotlines in building resilient societies.

Index Terms

Crisis Line, Telephone, Mental Health, AI, Society, Self-Healing, Request, Offer, Volunteering, Effectiveness