

Behavioral Effects of Crisis and Suicide Volunteering

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Abstract

With alarming increases of anxiety, depression, and suicide in the United States, there is a great need for volunteers and workers in mental health, who often are subject to burnout, prolonged stress, cynicism, and lack of vocational accomplishment. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in 2018, “Death by Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the United States”. To combat these threats, several organizations such as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, the Arkansas Crisis Center (ACC) provide volunteer mental health services to the community. A selection of 20 participants was chosen from the volunteer and employee population of the ACC. The participants completed an online survey consisting of 12 questions consisting of the Depression, Anxiety and Stress (DASS) Scale. The 12 questions measured Depression, Anxiety, and stress. A total of 17 volunteers responded to all questions on the survey and contributed data to the analysis. A Pearson correlation revealed no relationship between the ages of the volunteers and the total survey scores the two variables, $r(14) = 0.03$, $p = -0.06$. Over 80 percent of the participants volunteering at the Arkansas Crisis Center were not affected by mental health burnout, as demonstrated by depression, anxiety, and stress levels recorded in the normal range. However, in addition to the burnout score, the depression score was elevated while the anxiety score was not elevated.

Keywords: Crisis, burnout, suicide, mental health volunteer, depression