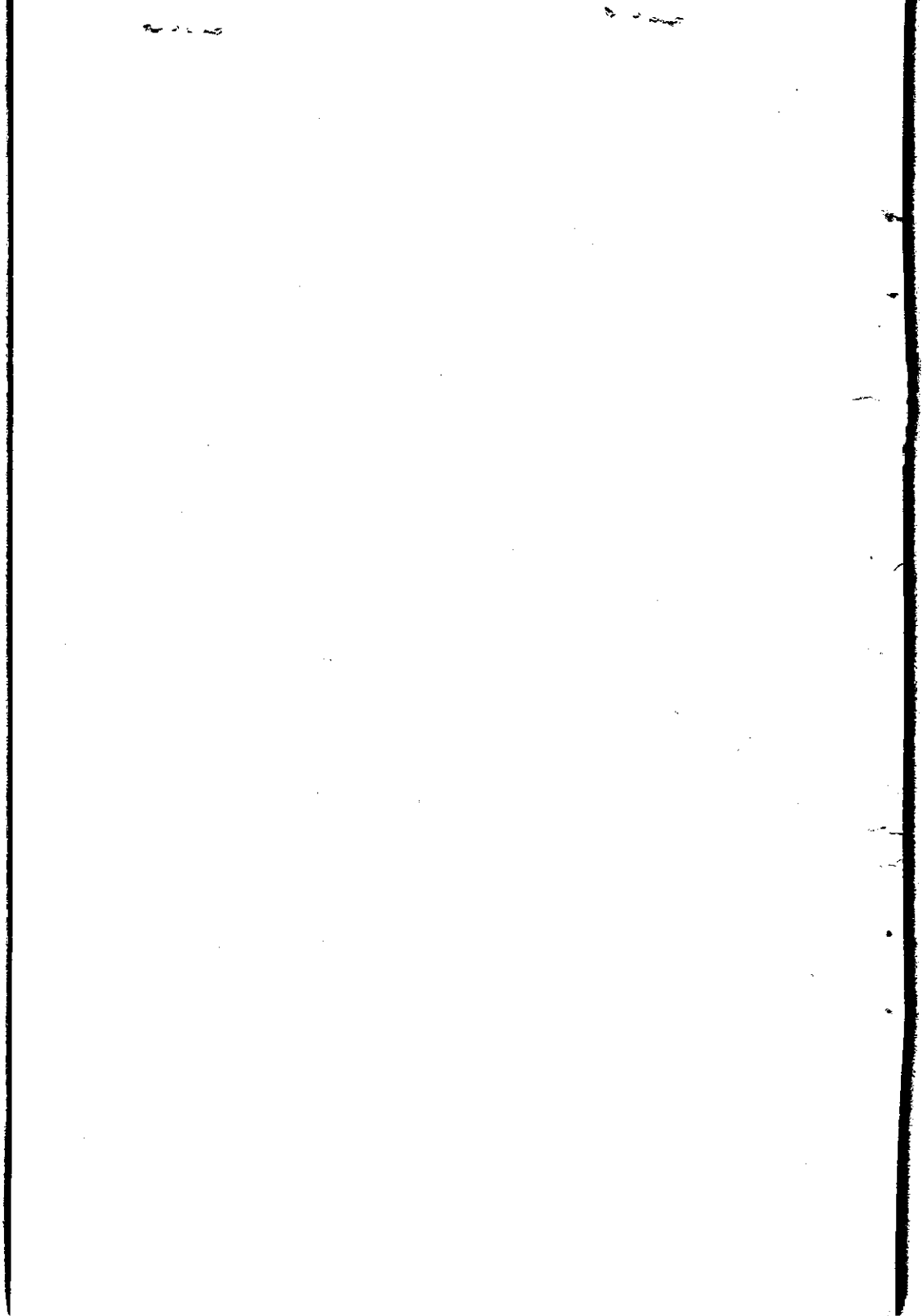




HOW TO MAKE A
WISH
THE WOMEN IN SELF HELP HANDBOOK



**HOW TO MAKE A
WISH
THE WOMEN IN SELF HELP HANDBOOK**

published by
WISH (Women-In-Self-Help), Westchester, Inc.
468 Rosedale Avenue
White Plains, N.Y. 10605

DEDICATION

This Handbook was written in memory of Dorothy R., one of WISH's charter members. Dorothy's commitment and dedication to our program set a standard for us all. She was a warm, caring, conscientious woman who gave unconditionally of her time and self. Those who were fortunate enough to have Dorothy listen to and help them were fortunate indeed. We can think of no better way to honor Dorothy's memory than to share the WISH program with women in other communities.



Dorothy R. and other volunteers at WISH

The name, WISH, has been registered with the U.S. Dep't. of Commerce Patent and Trademark Office, serial number 229750.

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Preface

People often raise the question, "Why telephone support systems? Isn't it more helpful to talk to people face to face?" One answer to this question is that, for many people, it is important to have a service that is anonymous, free, and available at the moment of need.

WISH (Women-in-Self-Help), Westchester, is such a telephone support system. It has been a significant service for close to 10,000 women in our community during the first five years of its existence.

Why did we choose this medium for our form of "laying on of hands"? This handbook will attempt to answer this question and describe the ways, means, and results of such a program.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“You’ve been working for a firm for 25 years and have just been told it’s closing. You are 50 years old and a single woman. How do you cope?”

“Your husband has just told you he is involved with another woman and he is thinking of moving in with her, leaving you with the young children. Your whole world has collapsed in one minute. What to do? Whom do you turn to?”

The above calls are but two of an infinite variety of calls received everyday by a self-help telephone support system called WISH, (Women-In-Self-Help).

This handbook describes this telephone support system and tells what it is, when it came into being, what it has accomplished, and how it can be duplicated in your community.

Background

First, a few words about telephone support systems in general. Telephone support systems are an outgrowth of “hot lines” developed by young people in the 1960’s. These hotlines were intended to deal with counter-culture problems resulting from drug abuse, the sexual revolution, and the Vietnam War. There was a necessity for anonymity, peer contact, and immediate availability of help because of the unique and emergency nature of the problems. The characteristics of delivering this service--free, anonymous, peer to peer, on the spot help at the moment of need have proven to be most useful additions to the repertoire of providing human services. They have been adapted to and incorporated in meeting the needs of various groups experiencing a common stress. They have come to be known as self-help or mutual help groups.

“Warmlines”

Telephone support systems, while they are available to individuals in crisis, attempt also to provide support for people experiencing the normal stresses of everyday life. In this sense, they can be viewed as “warmlines” rather than “hotlines”. WISH is an example of such a “warmline”. It is intended to help women break through their isolation in dealing with the problems they have in common in their lives. Other examples of “warmlines” are: La Leche League, Alliance for the Families of the Mentally Ill (ALMI), and Heart Clubs.

Basic Goals

Telephone support systems aim to bring together, in an immediate and direct way, a person in need of information, and emotional or social support, with another person who can meet these needs. The basics of a telephone support system such as WISH are: a telephone, people trained to do telephone counseling, and a resource file of existing community services. The telephone contact revolves around the caller’s sharing her situation, and the counselor’s listening “with a woman’s ear”. The purpose of the discussion that follows is to help the caller organize her thoughts, express her feelings, raise questions, and in so doing, begin to formulate a course of action, or a decision, in relation to the reason for the call. The caller often needs further help from a community resource. The listener then provides specific information about these resources. Above all, the listener’s goal is to give the caller the assurance that she is not and does not have to be alone in dealing with her situation.

Why a service for women?

Telephone support systems are particularly appropriate for women because of the rapid social changes facing all women today. Isolation, alienation, lack of availability of extended family, mobility, and changes in the relationships between men and women have resulted in situational stresses that women have in common. Woman-to-woman self-help lines have proven to be an excellent method of dealing with these stresses.

WISH provides an *overall* support system for women of all ages, socio-economic and racial background, and types of problems. A telephone service, because of its immediacy, anonymity, and low cost, is particularly useful in that all women are able to avail themselves of it.

Telephone support systems, in addition, are available to meet the needs of women undergoing specific stresses, such as a marital conflict, widowhood, new motherhood, career re-entry, etc. Being "just a phone call away," can itself be an immediate reduction of stress. Telephone support systems serve as:

- 1) sounding boards
- 2) providers of immediate human response
- 3) means for sorting out alternatives
- 4) preventive "safety nets"
- 5) information and referral resources.

Sponsored or Independent?

A telephone support system can be sponsored and funded by an already existing organization or service agency, or it can be independent. The obvious advantages of being sponsored — having all the resources of the parent organization available, i.e., money, publicity, personnel, secretarial services — are balanced by the freedom of an independent organization to develop its program according to its own goals. The satisfactions of independent functioning and opportunities for creativity are apt to be greater for the staff in a free standing organization. An independent program also is freer to move quickly and responsively to changes needed in its program. Since self-help services often develop because of a gap in community support services, this is an important advantage.

Requirements

Any community can have a telephone support system for women. It requires, first and foremost, a nucleus of committed women who are willing to volunteer to share the time required for this purpose. These women need to locate a place from which the program can operate and a small amount of money to cover the initial costs of telephone and other operating expenses. (Tax free status and incorporation allows for obtaining many services at minimal or no cost.) Before embarking upon any activity, however, it is important to discuss plans and purposes with relevant community agencies, to gain community backing.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZING THE PROGRAM

Getting started

The heart of every self-help program is people. To get started one needs a minimum of two like-minded people who are willing and able to define what they wish to do, and assume responsibility for doing the groundwork and launching the program. Starting with two people serves as an immediate check and balance system. Ideas are bounced back and forth and tested. Two people can encourage each other and share the work and decision making. It is important not to bite off more than you can chew. Set a modest goal at first. Growth can come later. The groundwork requires the following:

Finding a place

There are many existing community institutions, such as churches, schools, or community centers that may well have available space they would be glad to provide for a minimal fee, or no fee, to a non-profit organization. Making the most of all the personal and community contacts that you have, and gaining acceptance in one of these institutions is often aided by personal contacts. Spread the word among everyone you know that you are looking for office space. In this, as in every other aspect of your self-help endeavor, persistence is essential.

The question arises as to whether a program might not operate out of someone's home. Our view and experience weigh strongly in favor of being office-based. Having an office ensures that all your working materials are in one place and available to all. It is professional, objective, and establishes for the whole community, including the volunteers, the seriousness of your purpose. For the volunteers, it provides a central place for meeting and storage of records. Operating from one person's home leaves the program and the group dependent upon that person and leaves the organization in an "invited guest" position.

Knowledge of your community

Before beginning a telephone support system, it is wise to discuss your intentions with the established services in the community — government, voluntary service agencies such as the Mental Health Association, family agencies, the local Y, and volunteer groups such as religious organizations, the Junior League, etc. If the community has a self-help clearinghouse, it is good to check in with them. If no other organization is meeting this need, you can begin by making contact with relevant service groups and discussing with them what you have in mind. Use these contacts as a start. They will lead to others. The response is apt to be positive if you are adding to community services and doing so on your own. The purpose of talking with established service groups is to receive their backing, enlist their support, and to be sure you are not duplicating services.

Financing the program

The financing of a self-help program on an all volunteer basis can be done on a minimal budget. The original investment in starting the WISH program in Baltimore in 1974 was \$150. The basics for which you will need some money are:

Telephone

Rent and equipment

Office supplies, i.e., flyers, brochures, stationery, typewriter, file

Postage

Printing with logo

Publicity

Telephone bills can be kept to a minimum because the program is a "call *in*" service. Rent is usually quite low if space is donated by a local church or school. Media publicity should be limited to public service announcements which are provided free of charge to not-for-profit organizations.

The initial funding can be shared by those who believe in the concept of the program. The initial investment for a six month testing period of the program needs to cover the cost of telephone installation and bills, rent if required, printing of publicity materials, and mailings. This initial 6 month investment need not exceed \$500. Once the program has taken root, you can turn to the community for ongoing financial support. If your organization continues on an all volunteer basis, you can operate on a budget of, minimally, \$2,000 per year.

Incorporation and tax exemption

It is advisable to become incorporated as a not-for-profit organization for tax purposes, protection against liability of staff, and organizational credibility. The legal expenses involved can often be obtained as a contribution from an interested legal firm. Obtaining a not-for-profit tax status opens the door for continuous fund raising. Telephone support systems are entitled to incorporation under the classification of educational institutions. However, you do not need to wait to receive your tax exempt status before organizing your service.

Organizational format

Your service needs to be visible, identifiable, and credible. It is helpful to have a name and logo that communicates quickly who you are and what you do, stationery that contains the names of known people in your community, and if possible, a catch phrase that describes your program.

Locating initial staff

The staff for self-help programs is usually unpaid. Secretarial help and equipment are sometimes possible to obtain on a volunteer basis. In the long run it is desirable to have at least a part time paid secretary/office manager, but when just getting started, try to get a volunteer.

A simple but effective way of locating initial staff is through word of mouth. Two co-founders can usually find a sufficient number of women among their friends and acquaintances who are both interested in and suitable for the program. With enthusiastic, committed women who are willing to launch a full five day a week program by taking two shifts initially, you can begin with 10 women. The other alternative is to start the program on a half day basis. To obtain additional volunteers, you can inform the community groups in your area of this need. If your community has a Volunteer Service Bureau, it is a good clearing house for volunteers. The public media, especially the local newspapers, will also mention the formation of the new group and the call for volunteers.

CHAPTER III

THE WISH TRAINING PROGRAM

Introduction

WISH training is designed to enable volunteers to listen and provide understanding, emotional support, and informed referrals. It is a process that begins with telephone screening and personal interviews, is followed by a two day seminar and by a three month on-the-job training period with an experienced peer counselor.

Telephone screening

Screening of volunteers begins with the initial telephone call by the prospective volunteer. WISH informs the caller of the expectations of the job, including a commitment of three hours a week for a period of at least six months as well as one monthly staff meeting. If the caller can meet these minimum requirements, you should consider with the caller her reasons for her interest in working for this program. While most people are self-selecting, the telephone screening can weed out people who are obviously inappropriate. For instance, typically appropriate responses are, "I think I'm a good listener", and "friends are always calling to talk to me". The occasional questionable response by a prospective volunteer is "my marriage just broke up and I need something to fill up my time" or "I've tried volunteering and no one has ever appreciated me". Such responses need to be explored further and considered along with the whole tenor of the conversation.

The application

An application is then sent requesting primarily information regarding reasons for interest in the service. We do not ask age or marital status, as we have no exclusionary eligibility requirements. Our main concern is in the potential volunteer's interest in volunteering and we try to discover this in several different ways. When the application is returned to us, the return being another

indication of the serious interest of the applicant, we arrange an appointment to discuss the program further and its suitability for the applicant.

The interview

The interview includes such matters as whether the applicant will receive satisfaction from a single anonymous phone call and whether she can adjust to the unpredictability of the number of calls on any one shift. If there is a question on the part of the interviewer, she is responsible for bringing it up with the applicant in a constructive way. For instance, if the applicant is really looking primarily to enlarge her social contacts and activities, the interviewer might raise the question of whether she would be getting what she is looking for from this experience and suggest an alternative, i.e., the "Y". The interviewer should also clarify whether the applicant has any overt prejudices which could interfere with her ability to be objective and non-judgmental in helping the caller. If there is question about an applicant's suitability, this should be discussed with her. It is important not to go along with an applicant simply because it is difficult to turn someone away. In the long run it is wiser to redirect the person elsewhere at an earlier point. Questions about applicants can always be discussed with other staff members before a final decision is made.

Training materials

A folder of the training materials is usually given to the applicant at the end of the interview, which the applicant reads prior to the training seminar. The basic materials included are: the articles: *A Self Help Telephone Service for Women*, and *Telephone Therapy: Some Common Errors and Fallacies*, (see Further Readings.) Materials about "*The WISH philosophy and methods*", as well as flyers and a log sheet are also included. The log sheets are our means of record keeping and are kept in a log book that is referred to by all the staff to keep them abreast of calls received.

Training seminars

Training sessions are led by two experienced WISH volunteers. The first session of the training seminar deals with the philosophy and objectives of WISH abstractly presented in the articles mentioned above and brought to life using the shared experience of the participants. The goal of this first session is for everyone to get a beginning sense of what we mean by woman-to-woman counseling, and a sense of rapport and common purpose among all the

participants.

The second part of the seminar is devoted to experiential training. Primarily, by means of role-playing typical calls, the trainees get a live sense of what is involved in doing telephone peer counseling. Each participant has an opportunity to role-play as the caller and as the telephone counselor. The two leaders do the initial demonstration for both roles. This serves both as role modeling and as an ice-breaker.

In role-playing, the main teaching goals are to point up the values of listening, tuning in on feelings, enabling the caller to find available constructive alternatives, and taking some positive action. Another goal in role-playing, is to have the applicant experience how it feels to be the caller and how it feels to be the listener. As each trainee has the opportunity to play out each role in relation to different kinds of calls, the discussion that follows centers around what the trainee was feeling while she was handling the call.

The leader raises the question with the trainee who played the role of the caller as to whether she feels she was helped and concurrently, with the "helper", as to whether she feels she was helpful. This brings to the fore specifics that are reviewed in terms of what was happening non-verbally as well as what was said overtly. In this way, we *begin* to see how we need to be tuned in to our own and the callers' feelings of frustration, anger and anxiety. How to deal with these feelings are inevitably part of the discussion, as such feelings may be often provoked by a call.

At the end of the training sessions, time should be allotted for a brief one to one discussion between the trainee and the trainer as to whether or not the trainee is ready for the next phase of the program which is "on-the-job-training". Occasionally there is some question about the suitability of the trainee for the service which should be discussed. Unless it is unequivocally clear that the trainee is unsuitable, the on-the-job-training should emphasize areas in which questions have been raised about the trainee.

On the job training

The "on-the-job training period" is the time during which the trainee gradually begins to integrate the goals touched on in the training sessions. The experienced staff person serves as a model at first, and then as a resource and support in helping the new staff member. The pattern is simple. After the new volunteer listens to a call handled by an experienced person, the call is discussed in terms of: what made the caller call WISH; what did she want or need at this particular time; what were we able to provide or not provide? In reviewing these questions, we are really asking, "What

did we hear; how did we respond; did we feel we were helpful; and how did we help?" The senior volunteer also reviews the call in terms of whether we were able to offer the caller options she was not aware of, and to motivate her to take constructive action in her own behalf.

Written on each desk are the following guidelines for reviewing calls:

Remember to:

1. *Listen* to the caller's request.
 2. *Empathize* with her position.
 3. *Focus* on her needs and feelings.
 4. *Suggest* options, reflect alternatives, but *DO NOT* decide for her.
-

Use of referrals

If the call is one in which the caller requires further help, she is referred by the volunteer to additional resources. It is important to share and explain to the trainee why certain resources were suggested. In this way, the trainee is introduced to the referral resources and gradually becomes familiar with them. It is also explained to the trainee that it is our policy to offer a caller more than one resource for a particular need. We do so because we are an anonymous, one-time contact, and are not in a position to make a finely selected referral, and also to encourage the caller to use her own judgment in determining which resource is most suitable for her. This is, in itself, strengthening.

Peer supervision

The trainer also serves to support the new person in her beginning attempts at telephone peer counseling. She, the trainer, is there to help the new person with the expected feelings of anxiety, self-criticism, and insecurity when she is first getting started. Since the trainer is right there on the spot when the trainee is taking the call, the trainer can also make suggestions and point out certain additional resources from the file.

CHAPTER IV

RESOURCES

Development of a referral file

How do you develop a resource file of appropriate support services for women? You can start by making a list of womens' needs and problems, i.e., reviewing in terms of the above, a woman's life cycle from adolescence to old age. Once you have developed such a list, you will want to obtain as complete a resource file as possible of all the existing human services in your area. These should include formal as well as informal resources. Formal resources are in the local social service directory, and if this is not available, can usually be obtained from local municipal offices. Informal resources include all the self-help organizations, hotlines, and natural support systems, such as community services and networks supplied by local churches, etc. As time goes on, clipping local newspaper items and getting on relevant mailing lists will provide you with up to date resources that you will add to your file.

Organization of a referral file

Once you have gathered this general information, you will want to organize this material by culling and classifying it. By grouping resources that are similar under general headings, you can start your classification system. For instance, all resources dealing with the needs and problems of senior citizens can be listed under the general category of "Aging". After completing your list of general headings, you can select and file the specific resources that are most relevant to your target group. You should end up with an alphabetized, cross referenced resource file. This file should be actively checked at intervals for currency, accuracy, and usefulness.

Form of referral file

Our experience indicates that a card file or rollodex system is the most efficient and easiest to use. To be able to add and remove cards is important. The wave of the future, however, is in the direction of a computerized system.

In addition to peer counseling, which is the major service you provide, you may also have to refer your callers to relevant resources for additional help. The telephone call to you is often the first step that leads to needed professional help. Our records show that approximately two-thirds of our callers require referrals.

SAMPLE RESOURCE CARD

MENTAL HEALTH

ORGANIZATION	PHONE	CONTACT PERSON	SERVICE DESCRIPTION
Mental Health Association	#	Ms. X	Walk-in crisis counseling. Suicide prevention. Abused Spouse Hotline.
Address			Referrals to private psychotherapist. Support Groups.

The above card contains what we have found to be the essential and most helpful information. It is important to have a description of the services offered by the agency. It is also most helpful in making a referral to be able to give the caller the name of a specific person to contact, though this is not always possible. Cross referencing of the heading MENTAL HEALTH can be to CRISES, BATTERED WOMEN, FAMILY PROBLEMS, and SUPPORT GROUPS.

CHAPTER V

PUBLICITY and PUBLIC RELATIONS

Introduction

A telephone peer counseling service is of value only if potential callers know of its existence. How do we accomplish this with as little outlay of money as possible? The unavoidable expenses for publicity are the cost of printing and mailing publicity materials, and a listing in the yellow pages of the telephone book. The materials, which can include brochures, flyers, and cards, should be clear, attractive, and professional looking, but should be kept short and simple. Some examples of our publicity materials are on page 15.

Cost of publicity

As a tax exempt organization, you are exempt from paying tax on these printed materials. In addition, you might be fortunate and be able to tap into "friends and contributors" who will be willing to provide printing at cost. Reproduction of these materials, i.e., copying in quantity, may also be obtained as a generous contribution. Distribution of these materials occasionally entails mailing costs. If you are going to be doing extensive mailings (over 2000 pieces a year) it would be worth the initial expense of getting bulk mailing rates (currently under 6¢ a piece). Once you have taken care of the production of your initial printed materials, you have unlimited opportunities for the distribution of them free of charge.

Media publicity

You are also entitled to free publicity through a variety of media. Radio and TV are required by law to give a certain percentage of their media time for public service announcements. It is advisable to put together 30 and 60 second radio and TV spots for this purpose, and write and telephone radio and TV Community Relations Departments in your community. This often requires diligent follow-up. Here is a typical radio spot we have used:

RADIO SPOT

Do you wish you had someone to talk to, another woman who will listen empathetically to your problems without making judgments? Do you have a troubled marriage, difficulty with your child, a struggle to make ends meet, the problems of a single parent? If so, call WISH (Women-in-Self-Help) in Westchester any weekday between 9 A.M. and 4 P.M. It's free! It's anonymous! It's immediate! A trained volunteer will answer your call — a woman like yourself who will listen with a woman's ear. A Japanese speaking volunteer is available Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and a Spanish speaking volunteer is available on Wednesday mornings. Call Wish (914-946-5757), that's 914-946-5757.

The most effective, as well as the most difficult publicity to obtain is a feature article in newspapers and magazines and interviews on radio and TV. Be aggressive and ingenious in getting to the reporters and interviewers who might be interested in you. Send them materials about your service that will be attractive and relevant to their program. Follow up with phone calls. It is helpful if you know a particular person to contact. In addition, any special event can be an occasion for a local press release, radio or TV spot announcement. The development of cable TV is another source for publicity.

Certain weekly advertising papers, such as "National Pennysaver" will also print items about your organization as a tax exempt service.

Community publicity

Churches, synagogues, libraries, social service, and civic organizations are often cooperative in distributing and publicizing your materials. Distribution, which can be by hand or mail can go to: supermarkets, doctors' and dentists' offices, real estate concerns, PTA's, pharmacies, banks, beauty parlors, hospitals, neighborhood health centers, and other public places that are appropriate for your service.

In addition to your regular white page listings, you can also request inclusion in special listings of community services that are in most telephone books.

Simultaneous with publicity of your program to the general public, it is important to apprise all other relevant community organizations of your services. This often results in a request for speakers at meetings and participation in programs sponsored by these organizations. There is usually an opportunity to present the literature of your service on a table or bulletin board at such meetings.

It may seem difficult to find people on your staff to carry out all the public relations tasks cited above. You will probably discover that there are volunteers who are attracted to this kind of activity and will find it rewarding and challenging.

WISH 

When you wish you
had someone to talk to
- call WISH

Monday - Friday 9
A.M. to 3 P.M.
914-946-5757



WISH, WESTCHESTER
Women-In-Self-Help

WISH 

WESTCHESTER
Women-In-Self-Help

WESTCHESTER
Women-In-Self-Help

Need to Talk?
Having Problems Making It?
Call WISH ...

A women-to-woman
telephone counseling,
information and referral
service. It's anonymous,
free and as near as
your telephone.

WISH is for every woman coping with needs and problems...
discrimination, jobs, housing, education, marital and family diffi-
culties, divorce, single parent, child care, loneliness...

When you wish you had someone
to talk to - call WISH
Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

914-946-5757



WISH, WESTCHESTER, INC.

Women-In-Self-Help



Mon. - Fri.
9 am - 3 pm

Information
Referrals

CHAPTER VI

ADMINISTRATION

Introduction

We mentioned that, basically, a telephone support system requires a telephone, volunteers, and a list of available community resources. Once you have found a place, a group of initial volunteers, and developed a resource file, how do you organize your day to day activities? Who is responsible for what? What are the responsibilities?

Staff scheduling

First and foremost, you need a scheduling system for the volunteer staff and someone who is responsible for this. Assuming that your staff is all part time, it works well to slot the staff into periods of time that are convenient for the individual volunteers and assure coverage of all the times during which the service is available. This is not always easy to do. It is useful to have 1) a list of all staff members, their names, addresses, and phone numbers; 2) the current schedule, one for each staff member. It is important to require all volunteers to get substitutes for themselves if, for one reason or another, they are unable to cover their shifts. The list of volunteers and the schedule makes it possible and easier to do this.

Office tasks

There are certain office tasks that need regular attention. Setting up a filing system, typing, providing a method for expediting outgoing mail, and ordering the necessary supplies are among the duties of a secretary. A part time secretary can usually take care of the above. It is also important to keep accurate records of all your financial intake and outgo. One of the volunteers can assume the duties of treasurer.

Interstaff communication

Interstaff communication is crucial in a program where there are no more than two volunteers on duty at the same time. Channels

for such communication are: the use of individual folders for messages for each staff member; notices on bulletin boards to apprise staff members of important new resources and general staff information. Staff meetings should take place at least once a month and are very important for the cohesive functioning of the program.

Each volunteer, when she covers her shift, is responsible for reading the logbook and checking her folder and the bulletin boards. This form of silent communication provides a link for all the volunteers.

Division of staff responsibilities

In addition to these basic responsibilities, it is of considerable help to have individual staff members in charge of different aspects of program management. Among these aspects are: 1) publicity and public relations; 2) fund raising; 3) training of new volunteers; 4) handling the organization's finances; 5) program development, including special projects; 6) keeping the resource file and bulletin board current; 7) staff meeting planning.

An independent telephone service that is organized on a non-hierarchical basis can function quite effectively when responsibilities are shared and taken seriously. When matters dealing with the philosophy of the organization require immediate decisions, it is prudent to have one or two people delegated to make these decisions. In addition, overall responsibility for seeing that all tasks are carried out should rest with one or two individuals who also function as the nominal head(s) of the organization.

CHAPTER VII

FUND RAISING

Grants

After you have obtained the initial outlay of money for launching your service, you will need to approach the community for ongoing support. You have proved your credibility in the community, i.e., you are receiving calls, providing service, and sustaining the program. You can now begin to investigate possible sources for further funding. Your local library should have the *Foundation Directory* which lists all the private foundations that give grants to not-for-profit organizations. The listing notes what type of organization the foundation will fund. You can then select the ones which you think might be interested in funding your service. The Federal Registry will list the government granting sources. There are also local foundations in each community which should be tapped and which might be particularly interested in your organization. In addition, there are books on "grantsmanship," courses, and materials.

Use of community contacts

You might wish to approach your federal, state and municipal elected representatives as a contact to support you in your grant applications or for any suggestions. Your liaison with relevant community groups, i.e., mental health organizations, women's groups, Y's, fraternal, religious, and political organizations, can also be helpful.

The private sector, i.e., business and personal contacts should also be approached. Letters appropriate to each group usually yield some positive results.

Special events

Special events for fund raising, such as luncheons, raffles, auctions, flea markets, and tag sales, are means of raising money and publicizing your program simultaneously. See page 19.

OCTOBER 1982

SAKS & COMPANY

SA Salutes:

W.I.S.H.

(WOMEN IN SELF HELP)

With A Breakfast Of:
FASHION & BEAUTY

9:00 a.m.

* for reservations call 946-5757

CHAPTER VIII

ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESEARCH

Self-help organizations are vulnerable to questions regarding the validity of their service, particularly when the service is anonymous and follow-up is limited by this fact. It is, therefore, important to have a simple but effective means of keeping routine statistics and to build in some information-getting system that allows for the possibility of systematic research. This can be done through careful consideration of what you wish to include in the basic log sheet. For instance, the classification system for the calls, notation of service given, and such other specifics as length of call and how the caller heard about the service, provide information that can be put to important practical use in evaluating your program. This is useful for future program planning as well as for interpreting your program to the community. Professional researchers also can then be called upon to do more sophisticated studies that provide more incisive information about the value and efficacy of your work.

CHAPTER IX

WISH — THE LIFE AND GROWTH OF ONE TELEPHONE SUPPORT SYSTEM

Beginnings

WISH, Westchester, began November 1976, in two rooms, generously provided by a local church, with two telephones funded originally by the beginning staff. The program had its origins in the city of Baltimore where it has been operating successfully for the last eight years. One of the founders of the Baltimore program moved to Westchester County and decided to try to replicate the program there. She and another local social worker began to plan. Through word of mouth, they gathered a nucleus of about 10 interested volunteers to staff the program from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays. These hours were originally chosen to reach women at home and because of the feasibility of these hours for volunteers. As a woman's support system, and not necessarily a crisis-oriented service, the hours seemed appropriate.

The initial staff was trained by the founders. Resources were developed by the volunteers who culled appropriate material from the local social service directory, newspapers, and other sources with which they were familiar. The log book was instituted for the purpose of recording calls and keeping statistics. A classification system, based on the type of calls anticipated in the community, was set up. The telephone company provided WISH with a "hunt on" telephone system for its callers. Callers are given one telephone number. When this number is busy, a second telephone line is automatically available.

The first 6 months were the most trying ones since, inevitably, there were few calls. As with any new venture, it takes time for it to become known, used, and recommended. The founders prepared the staff for this. Fortunately, there was enough work involved in preparing the resources, working on publicity, and discussing incoming calls to keep the volunteers actively involved.

Shifts were only for three hours, thus making it possible to bear with slow periods.

Types of calls

The number of calls gradually increased as a result of publicity and word of mouth as can be seen from these statistics:

Year	No. of Calls
1976-1977	980
1977-1978	1420
1978-1979	1800
1979-1980	2400
1980-1981	2500

It might be of interest here to describe the kinds of calls that began to come in. They ranged from marital and family relationship problems, depression, child care, abuse, housing, career guidance, employment, financial difficulties, to discrimination and legal issues. In addition to the calls listed at the beginning of this handbook, here are some further examples:

1. *You've recently moved to a new city far away from your friends and family. Everyone in your immediate family, through your help, has settled in, and you are finally alone with yourself. But what do you do now? You hardly know a soul and you are beginning to feel resentment at having had to make this move altogether. You are beginning to feel a "blue funk" coming on which you don't feel you can share with your family. What to do? Whom do you talk to?*

2. *You are the mother of a nine month old baby who has just dumped his cereal on the floor for the fourth time. Exasperated, you finally scream at him. He bursts into tears and you are overwhelmed with remorse. He is inconsolable, does not let you comfort him, but finally falls asleep in his playpen. Your behaviour gnaws at you and you are rapidly becoming depressed. What to do? Whom do you talk to?*

3. *Your husband died 6 month ago. You thought you were managing pretty well but suddenly you are feeling overwhelmed with a sense of loss. What do you do?*

Problem calls

Special problem calls, which we anticipated and prepared for to some degree, were those dealing with the crisis of suicide and battering as well as repeat callers, and silent callers. With crisis calls, we support the caller by referring her to the appropriate agency. Most communities have emergency services, such as suicide

prevention hotlines, and emergency financial aid. It is helpful to establish specific referral procedures with these emergency services so that the referral goes smoothly and quickly.

WISH does occasionally receive "repeat" calls. Repeat calls can be of various kinds. Some provide feedback about the help received. Others come from the same person periodically but about different concerns. Still others are from callers who begin to use the service as a "crutch." It is difficult to decide how to handle these latter calls since the callers often use the service as one of their last resorts. It requires walking a fine line between not rejecting the caller and yet limiting the call so that it is not used as a substitute for more constructive action.

Occasionally, the volunteer receives a call during which silence prevails. This might be the beginning of an "obscene" call or a case where the caller is having difficulty getting started. With regard to the former, the best policy is to terminate the call as quickly and calmly as possible. With regard to the latter, the idea is to give the caller as much time and encouragement as she needs to open up about her problem.

Once you have seen your program through its first year, it is a good idea to take a backward look. You might want to see if your calls have been accelerating, whether they represent a cross-section of your population, if there are certain patterns to the kind of calls and if some of the calls uncover needs that are not being met by the community. With regard to the latter, it is particularly exciting and rewarding if, within the limits and nature of your own telephone support system, you can develop a way of meeting these needs, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER X

WISH SATELLITE SERVICES

Mother's Connection

WISH, Westchester, for instance, after receiving a large number of calls from mothers of infants and toddlers who were feeling isolated and lonely, developed a "spinoff" service called "The Mother's Connection." By the use of the WISH telephone number, these mother could be "connected" with other mothers in their neighborhoods in a similar situation. Some mothers volunteered to be the coordinating mothers in their areas. "The Mother's Connection" has made it possible for the isolated mother to find companionship for herself and her children and develop mutual aid programs according to her needs and interests at no cost, and through the use of an already existing service.

Japanese Connection

About two and a half years after it was established, WISH saw a need for extending its services to the Japanese speaking population of Westchester. WISH, therefore, started a "spinoff" service, "The Japanese Connection".

"The Japanese Connection" is addressed primarily to the wives of Japanese business men who come to the U.S. for two to five years. The wives often do not speak English comfortably, are unfamiliar with U.S. customs and are separated from family and friends. Three Japanese speaking volunteers were recruited and trained to deal with the many questions and problems that beset women in a foreign country. The volunteers were found as a result of contacting a variety of community resources that had a relationship to this population. When even only one or two minority people are convinced that there is a genuine need for serving their minority group, you and they are able to begin to provide a service for them. The Japanese volunteers themselves were then able to set up their own resource file and provide for publicity in their own local media in their own language.

Spanish Connection

“The Spanish Connection” was modeled after “The Japanese Connection” and began its services shortly after. The program was prepared to explore the needs of Spanish speaking U.S. residents who will remain here permanently. Calls from this population tend to revolve around jobs, housing, economic and family problems. An immediate and concerned response from a person who speaks one’s own language is of great help in coping with the problems mentioned.

Black Women’s Connection

Our newest “spinoff” has been targeted to the needs of Black women in Westchester. Minority women are even more isolated in the suburbs than the majority population. Social and support groups that do exist tend not to attract Black women. WISH, therefore, at the suggestion of our Black volunteers, developed a network, comparable to “The Mother’s Connection,” for this group. “The Black Women’s Connection” is a neighborhood based support group for Black women. Its purpose is for Black women to share common interests, mutual support, companionship, and social activities. It is for married, single, separated and divorced and widowed women. Coordinators are volunteers who were recruited through a small notice in the local newspaper. Referrals to these coordinators are made through the WISH telephone number. WISH provides backup and publicity for the program. This program is in its beginnings, but already gives promise of serving a useful purpose.

On the next pages are some examples of flyers for our Satellite services.

THE BLACK WOMEN'S CONNECTION

Would you like to be connected with other black women who live nearby?

Would you like to have someone join you for a movie, play, concert, a trip to New York City?

Would you like to set up a Black Women's Group to share common interests?

Would you just like to have another Black woman to talk to?

CALL THE BLACK WOMEN'S CONNECTION AT

WISH (Women-In-Self-Help)
(914) 946-5757

MON-FRI
9AM-5PM



WISH, WESTCHESTER, INC.
Women-in-Self-Help
468 Rosedale Ave.
White Plains, N.Y. 10605
1913 946575



CONSULTANTS
Gay Dickerson, Ed.D.
4 Women's Place
Gay Dickerson
F.P.C.A. White Plains
The Office
Accountant
Rosalie Patten, A.C.S.W.
Hempstead C.C.S.W.
Mental Health Association
Marilyn Smith, Ph.D.
Continuing Education
Sarah Lawrence College

WISH
WOMEN-IN-SELF-HELP
MUJERES AYUDANDOSE A SI MISMAS

WISH es un servicio de apoyo y gratificante que se dedica a servir a las mujeres de esta comunidad. Es un servicio de mujeres que le puede ayudar a Ud. con sus problemas matrimoniales, financieros, de empleo, de familia, de salud, y de asuntos relacionados al bienestar de un país extranjero.

Actualmente WISH tiene una consejera que habla español, que está para servirle los miércoles de 9:00 am a 3:00 pm. (This address probably will be to determine the person to talk to. It is also important to have some information about some agencies or organizations previously mentioned in the Spanish.)

(914) 946-5757

WISH, WESTCHESTER, INC.
Women-in-Self-Help
468 Rosedale Ave.
White Plains, N.Y. 10605
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CONSULTANTS
Ida Davdoff, Ed.D.
4 Women's Place
Gay Dickerson
F.P.C.A. White Plains
Tom Devine
Accountant
Eliane Feiden, A.C.S.W.
Janice Cohen, A.C.S.W.
Mental Health Association
Maetha Green, Ed.
Continuing Education
Sarah Lawrence College

WISH
Women-in-Self-Help
女性のための無料電話相談

アメリカのお困りの方はいらしゃいませんか?
問題、教育問題、言葉の問題から新しい
「カー」の落ち込み方、買物情報、日常生活の
事でも訓練を受けたカウンセラーが相談に乗ります。
の相談は月曜日から金曜日の毎日7時から
。日本人のカウンセラーによる相談は火曜日と
7時半から11時半迄。
電話相談は匿名、無料です。

(914) 946-5757

MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS

W.I.S.H. of Westchester (Women in Self-Help) invites you to

CALL THE MOTHER'S CONNECTION
9AM-5PM
946-5757
and get in touch with mothers of children like yours

CHAPTER XI

THE JOYS OF WORKING AT WISH

Introduction

A major aspect of the WISH service is its value to the volunteers. It is important for the staff to get satisfaction from providing services. This happens in many ways.

The WISH process is a structured transformation of women's personal life experiences into a significant resource for the community. This resource has been heretofore undervalued and therefore unchanneled. The WISH process places a value on women's contribution to women and channels it in an organized way.

The experience of working at WISH provides volunteers with immediate gratification. Positive feedback from callers who say at the end of a call, "I feel much better now", or at the beginning of a call, "You helped me so much once before," or "You helped me realize what I have to do next," are all confirmations to the volunteer of the value of what she has to offer. Even without such statements the volunteer often knows that the caller has received the needed support. This kind of immediate gratification is rare.

Learning Through Helping

In addition to feeling useful and appreciated, the volunteer is continually learning more about other women — the various problems they have and the constructive and destructive ways they deal with them. The result of this is that they understand more about women's strengths and vulnerabilities. For instance, when a listener hears from a caller about a problem she is having in her marriage and can offer suggestions as to possible actions she can take to improve her situation, she is learning as well as helping. She is enlarging her perspective all the time.

Helping Each Other

We also help each other. While there is no structure for using

WISH as a support group for the staff's personal problems, there is hardly a person who hasn't on occasion casually raised an issue with another staff member by saying "I have a WISH problem," and relating it. Usually there is some feedback that is helpful. Indirectly, the WISH organization thus serves to some degree as a support group for the staff as well as for the callers.

Egalitarian Form Of Organization

Because WISH is organized on a non-hierarchical basis, where people are not assigned to, but volunteer for responsibilities, and the work is shared, it is free of competition, and the usual juggling for position. The rewards are purely internal and personal. The atmosphere, therefore, is comfortable and congenial.

The WISH service is also stripped to the bone in terms of bureaucratic structure. This means that the caller does not have to deal with talking to intermediaries, giving unnecessary information, having to wait for appointments, or paying a fee. This allows the volunteer to give her direct and immediate attention to the concerns of the caller. Unbound by procedural requirements, all of the volunteers' energies, including her warm receptive responsiveness can go directly to the caller. This is gratifying to the volunteer as well.

Growth Opportunities

Becoming skilled in delivering the WISH service is the first step in growth for the staff volunteers. The staff member may never have been able to use her knowledge and experience about women's issues except with her own family and among her friends. In seeing her skills used as part of a service that is making a respected contribution to the community, she has opened the door for her own further development.

Working side by side with women of different ages, marital status, ethnic, religious and educational backgrounds, the volunteer enlarges her direct experience with all kinds of women. Our services have been extended to and staffed by a variety of minority groups. This experience has been most enriching.

Staff Education

A staff education program via staff meetings or seminars also adds to the growth opportunities for the volunteers. Regular staff meetings are essential to maintain cohesiveness and organization

and provide an opportunity for the entire staff to get together. Staff meetings are also used to increase knowledge and skills via speakers and discussion of problem calls.

New Programs

Staff meetings often result in suggestions for moving the program forward as members often have creative ideas for adding to the basic services. As an independent self-help service, it is possible to implement these ideas. New tasks and responsibilities are undertaken which engender excitement and enthusiasm. Stagnation is avoided. As the program grows, it inevitably provides additional growth opportunities for the staff.

SUMMARY

You have now read all about a telephone support system for women called WISH, its history, services, form of organization, and how you can start a similar program in your community. The WISH program has proven to be a useful and accepted service for women in three states on the East Coast: Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. For lay women who are interested in providing direct human helping services to other women, on a volunteer basis, WISH enlarges and extends their opportunities.

This handbook is intended as a guide for developing WISH programs in other communities in the United States or overseas. Obviously, communities vary in their needs, and adaptations of the WISH program to meet different needs are encouraged. For those interested in implementing the basic WISH program in their community, however, additional information and help is available. Consultations and "starter" workshops can be arranged. Write or telephone WISH.

468 Rosedale Avenue
White Plains, N.Y. 10605
(914) 946-5757

WISH OFFICES

WISH Baltimore
P.O. Box 11076
Baltimore, Maryland 21212
(301) 433-9400

WISH Essex County
321 Milburn Ave.
Milburn, New Jersey 07041
(201) 678-9474

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