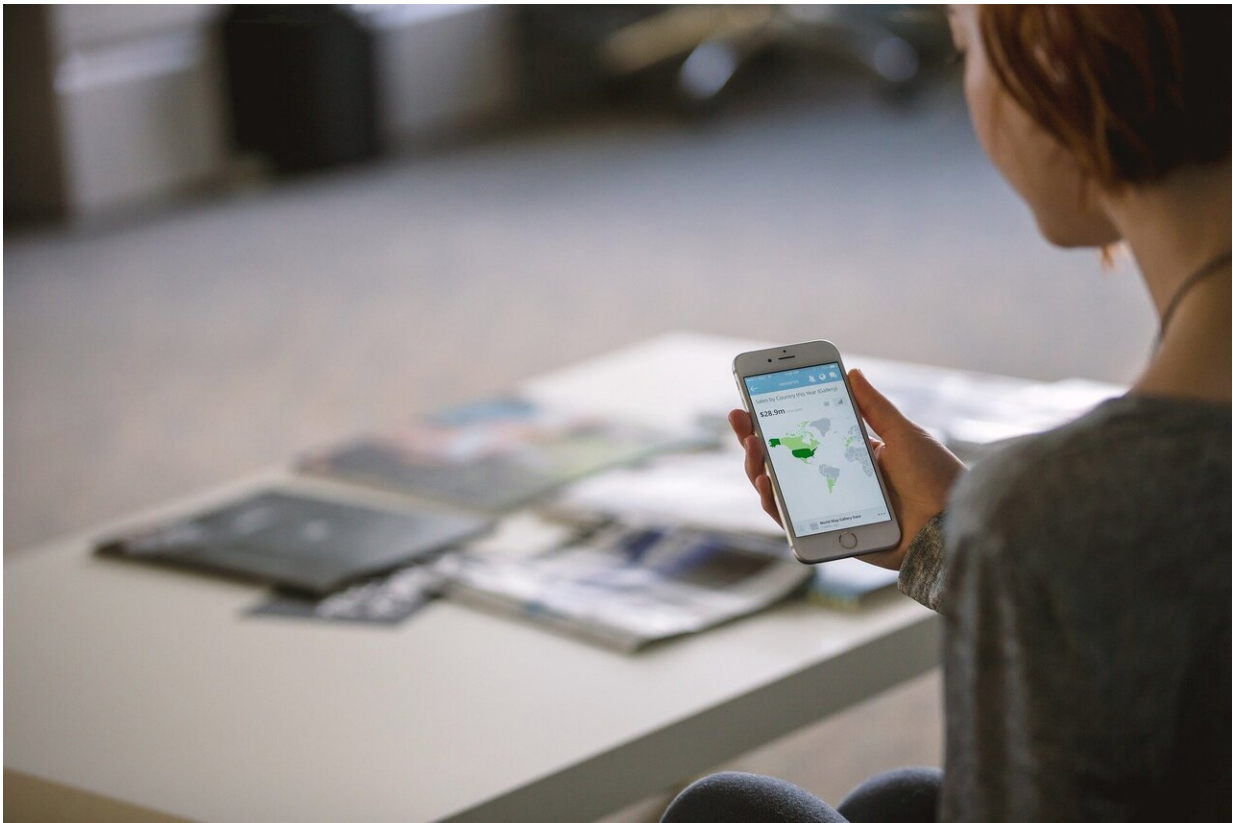


What features make text-based counseling effective?

March 10 2020



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A fascinating new study has shown that the duration of a text-based counseling session, the length of the counselor's messages, and quick response time by the counselor are important factors in determining the

impact of counseling. The study of young people under the age of 23 who relied on a dialogue-based, human-handled child hotline is published in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*.

The article entitled "Texting at a Child Helpline: How Text Volume, Session Length and Duration, Response Latency, and Waiting Time Are Associated with Counseling Impact" was coauthored by Trine Sindahl, University of Copenhagen and Willemijn van Dolen, University of Amsterdam Business School. The researchers concluded that even though there is no face-to-face interaction, the clients might benefit from the texting as long as the counselor responds promptly and in long, dense, expressive messages. The number of messages exchanged is not as important as the total length of the texting session.

The researchers found an overall positive effect of the [counseling](#) immediately after a session and two weeks later. Counseling impact was based on the client's experience of being heard, changes in well-being, and empowerment.

"The latest statistics indicate that 24 million children and young people reach out to helplines. By offering access through different modalities, including chat and text, individuals can now choose to discuss their emotions using the technology with which they feel most comfortable," says Editor-in-Chief Brenda K. Wiederhold, Ph.D., MBA, BCB, BCN, Interactive Media Institute, San Diego, California and Virtual Reality Medical Institute, Brussels, Belgium.

More information: Trine Natasja Sindahl et al, Texting at a Child Helpline: How Text Volume, Session Length and Duration, Response Latency, and Waiting Time Are Associated with Counseling Impact, *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* (2020). [DOI: 10.1089/cyber.2019.0100](https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2019.0100)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

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