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Mental Health Maze: Crisis Services of North Alabama offers 24/7 help to those in need

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The Crisis Services of North Alabama has volunteers around the clock that offer a listening ear, and resources to callers who need help in time of a crisis.

"We serve 24/7 so they come overnight they come at odd hours and they really have to have a passion and a heart for helping people," Becky Cecil, with CSNA said.

WAAY 31 spoke to one volunteer, Mike Hollis, who says although he doesn't earn a paycheck for the work he does, it's the most rewarding job.

"You walk away feeling pretty good, you helped somebody just a little bit, you made a little difference in somebodies day," Hollis explains.

Volunteer crisis councilors must take a 36 hour training course. There they learn how to handle calls ranging from domestic to sexual assaults, mentally ill patients, even possible suicidal callers.

"We talk about whether a person has a plan, or has a gun," Hollis said.

You can imagine, some of these calls can be high stress. Hollis says most of the time the caller just needs someone to listen.

"Take a deep breath, and then you let them talk. Just listening to them can release a lot of stress," Hollis said.

The center provides both in house resources and outside resources to callers depending on the situation. CSNA is funded only on donations and grants from the United Way. Cecil tells WAAY 31 the current lack of funding for mental health programs can make it hard on the center.

"Funding is hard to come by for some agencies so we can only do what we can do," Cecil said.

CSNA's helpline takes about 17,000 calls per year. Organizers say they depend on caring people like Hollis to keep going.

If you would like to donate to Crisis Services of North Alabama, or learn more about volunteering click [here](#).

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