# Award #2128863 (FW-HTF-P): Supporting Future Crisis Line Work Through the Inclusive Design of Worker-Facing Tools that Empower Self-Management of Wellbeing and Performance

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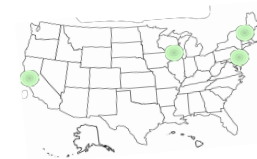
Motivation & Aims

Counseling hotlines are a vital part of the U.S. healthcare system, providing immediate mental health support to anyone, anywhere, anytime using a range of **technology platforms** including telephone, text messaging, web chat, and automated agents to engage in tens of millions of conversations. **Such services are helping to make mental health care more mainstream** by reducing stigma and increasing access.

However, the growing prevalence of mental illness in young populations and college students is straining university counseling centers and **crisis line workers (CLWs)**, compounding the challenges they face. These **workers are at high-risk for burnout**, **secondary trauma, and compassion fatigue** due to the burden of their work. Many report a **lack of resources** to manage this pressure, which is exacerbated by high turnover rates.

Our aim is to **create assessment and informatics tools that empower CLWs** to self-monitor, skill-build, and better manage personal wellbeing and counseling performance.
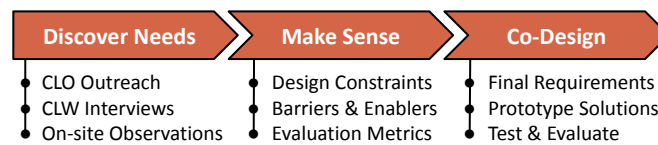
Scope & Stakeholder Partnerships

Our scope is campus and nearby **crisis line organizations (CLOs)** that manage the growing yet **underserved mental health needs of youth and student populations**.

Discovery & Design Process

Our **iterative process** revisits formative stages of needfinding and interpretation as we prototype and test solutions with CLW partners. This approach reveals challenges early and encourages **collaborative redesign**.

Discover Needs	Make Sense	Co-Design
• CLO Outreach	• Design Constraints	• Final Requirements
• CLW Interviews	• Barriers & Enablers	• Prototype Solutions
• On-site Observations	• Evaluation Metrics	• Test & Evaluate

Preliminary Groundwork

This planning grant worked to **foster partnerships** with CLOs across 4 geographical regions and begin **needfinding activities**. Thus far we have:

✓ Established an advisory board with expertise in health psychology and digital privacy
✓ Developed IRB protocols and recruitment materials
✓ Forged preliminary relationships with local CLOs (logos to the left) at each grant site
✓ Recruited and trained graduate students in needfinding and interviewing techniques for discovery and co-design research
✓ Launched recruitment for counseling interviews
✓ Submitted a follow-up proposal to FW-HTF-R

Team Members: Dr. David Sirkin, Dr. Rebecca Currano, Aishwarya Chandrasekaran, Helen Tosteson, Tahsin Khan, and Shirin Amouei
Advisory Board: Dr. Ryan M. Beveridge and Dr. Jennifer King

Next Steps

With additional support from NSF, we will focus on field work, data collection, and needs analysis. Using these data and understanding, we will co-design (prototype, evaluate, iterate) digital diagnostic and self-care intervention tools, to support the work and wellbeing of CLWs and similar counselors.