

2015-2016 Faculty of Education HSS Seed Grant Competition

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Project Title: The Interpersonal Process of Online Chat-Based Crisis Intervention: A Pilot Study

Project Abstract:

When people are in an emotional crisis, empathetic listening facilitates their emotion disclosure and reduces their distress. This phenomena has been observed during in-person and phone-based crisis intervention, but has not been studied in online chat-based crisis intervention - an increasingly popular crisis intervention modality. The proposed study will investigate the interpersonal process of chat-based crisis intervention using 100 chat transcripts randomly sampled from the 2014 crisis chats at the Vancouver Crisis Centre. The specific research questions are: (1) Do counsellors' empathetic responses increase chatters' emotion disclosures? (2) Do chatters' emotion disclosures predict emotional de-escalation? (3) Do emotion disclosures mediate the relation between counsellors' empathy and chatters' emotional de-escalation? Findings will inform interpersonal theory and crisis intervention practice. Further, this study will demonstrate feasibility, community-based partnership, and the importance of this new knowledge to facilitate further research funding from SSHRC and other funding organizations.