

Note - July 15, 2021 Video Conference Summary:

I didn't transcribe the second of the two video conferences that were held at the request of Shawn Rodriguez. I summarized the part I remember most vividly within my August 21, 2021 opinion paper, and am providing that summary here, excerpt from paper pages 15-16.

I remember vividly, because it hurt. I remember looking out the window after the messaging was given to me, of the "potential" harms that could come from sharing my opinion paper, and I thought "Do I respond to this, or not?" It reminded me of tactics of power and control from intimate partner abuse resources.

I decided to respond. I said if any of these "potential" harms were to happen, it wouldn't be my responsibility for calling attention to them. It would be because they were in themselves harmful, and that responsibility rests with Crisis Text Line.

Words to that effect. Crisis Text Line can produce their own transcripts because Mr. Rodriguez had legal associate Erica Ruff typing during both conferences, I presume recording everything that was said (first one held June 4, 2021). Tim Reiersen

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*Personal Note.* This volunteer work has challenged me, and I have grown as a person. I have a lot of gratitude for this organization, in its entirety. I was not aware of Loris.ai, Inc. until the firing of Nancy Lublin caused me to research the organization. Once I became aware of Loris.ai, questions came to me, and I naturally began looking for answers. The Crisis Text Line organization eventually took notice. A designated representative engaged me in conversation, and the person was speaking for the organization.

In a videoconference on July 15, 2021, I was asked to confirm my stated intentions, which I had shared more than once. These were to research, collect facts, and write an opinion paper calling for an extension of the 2020 reform initiatives towards diversity, equity, and inclusion to include conversation data, including questioning the ethical basis for the organization’s monetization model, and with the further intention to share that paper with the volunteer community, corporate executives, corporate board members, the data ethics committee, and with staff. I was told that I was entitled to my own opinions and the organization was not telling me to change how I felt. I was told, however, that if I carried out my plan, it would be inconsistent with the fundamental mission and objectives of Crisis Text Line. Therefore, if I chose to proceed, I would be terminated as a volunteer.

Further, I was told that there could be unintended consequences if I were to proceed. What followed was a litany of potential unintended consequences that could occur due to my action: that my standing as a volunteer would color any message I have as more damaging because it could come across as insider information; that donors don’t like drama and it could cause some donors to withhold funds, or dissuade donors from giving in the first place; that it could be disturbing to other volunteers; that the optics of an insider raising ethical concerns could damage the reputation of the organization and that paid staff may need to be let go for lack of funds. Next, that it could dissuade texters from using the service. The reasoning given was that the texter demographic is young. Young people, I was told, don’t tend to read entire articles but might remember a social media post, or adverse press with a negative statement, and that could give enough of a vague negative association that they decide not to use the service, thinking “maybe I can’t trust Crisis Text Line”, or “I heard that volunteers don’t trust them”.

The organization told me these kinds of things can’t be accepted coming from a volunteer. That I could cause harm. The organization told me if I don’t feel that the alignment with Crisis Text Line is there, then I don’t need to stay. To this last I replied, “I’m not going to quit”.

After reflection, I came to see the hurtful message to me as an indicator of truth. It proved to me, beyond doubt, that there are in fact two organizations within the one. The calling for reform is to make them one. One that stands free from financial motivations in connection with conversation data. One that stands firmly with persons in crisis. One that practices empathy in every aspect of its being.

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