HUNGARIAN FEDERATION OF TELEPHONE HELPLINES (LESZ)

56 Years of Being There for Those in Need

Hungary's first telephone helpline was established in Debrecen in 1970. Its founding mission was to prevent suicide, provide support in times of crisis, and promote mental health. Today, in 2026, our network comprises 30 helpline services across Hungary and neighbouring countries, all operating in accordance with three fundamental principles: anonymity, voluntary service, and strict confidentiality.

Every year, our organisation handles 200,000 calls and 8,000 emails, with our volunteers contributing more than 100,000 hours of voluntary service. Our free, round-the-clock helpline is available via 116-123, while our 06 80 810 600 support helpline is available 120 hours a week. In addition, our volunteers provide support through dedicated helplines serving Hungarian-speaking communities in Transylvania (Romania), Transcarpathia (Ukraine), and Slovakia, as well as through our member services operated in cooperation with the Reformed Church.

The issues raised by callers reflect the diverse challenges people in various social groups face in their everyday lives. These include emotional and relationship difficulties, intergenerational conflicts, changes in health and well-being, and existential concerns, among many others. Through our referral network, we can also help callers access face-to-face support from qualified professionals and specialists. Nearly 550 volunteers across the Carpathian Basin answer calls in Hungarian. We place great emphasis on organising joint professional forums, training programmes, and conferences, while continuously strengthening professional cooperation across our network.

As part of our ongoing organisational development, each helpline service is supported by a designated professional lead – a psychologist, mental health specialist, or psychiatrist – who works alongside the service coordinator. All prospective volunteers undergo a thorough selection process and comprehensive training. Only after successfully passing their examinations and completing a period of supervised call observation are they authorised to provide support independently. Ongoing professional development is an integral part of our work. It is ensured through regular case discussions, further training, professional supervision, and events at both local and national levels.

Our Association operates entirely through grants, support, and donations. We have no salaried employees; all our work is carried out by dedicated volunteers.

Contact & Support

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