

## Psychology Student Terrian Smith Serves as Crisis Counselor on 2-1-1 Miami Hotline

Student Contributing to

**Community  
Impact**

by Stephanie Wong



Terrian Smith serves as a crisis counselor on a resource referral hotline. It's a demanding role, but she has good reason to feel rewarded as a volunteer.

As she tells it, not only does she have a "great relationship" with her supervisor, but she also understands the impact of her service on each person who calls the hotline. Within two years, Smith has helped about 750 individuals receive life-changing support and crucial resources in their time of crisis.

Jewish Community Services of South Florida provides helpline services, operating 2-1-1 Miami. The 24/7, free, and confidential hotline connects people in need to a variety of community resources, explains Smith's supervisor, Tiffany Hernandez.

Originally from Ohio, Smith moved to Miami after a brief period spent in Atlanta, Georgia. There she witnessed the harsh realities of homelessness at Piedmont Park.

"There was a period in my family's life when we slept in a car," Smith shares. "I was a child at the time. To see people in that situation now really shifted my perspective to not be so selfish and to have a greater sense of appreciation for what I have, instead of focusing on what I don't."

A Barry Service Corps member, Smith takes her job seriously and finds fulfillment in lending a listening ear. Smith remembers a young client who considered hurting herself. After asking the 12-year-old if she was in a safe place, Smith began to listen to her story, and by the end of the conversation, they were discussing how thrilling and bright the girl's future really was. "High school is going to be so exciting," Terrian recalls telling her.



**JCS  
Helpline  
Services**



Terrian Smith has helped about 750 individuals receive life-changing support and crucial resources in their time of crisis. She is the youngest JCS Helpline Services counselor.

*Photos by John Sem Victor*

As the youngest counselor at 2-1-1 Miami, Smith has been able to share her own struggles with homelessness and suicidal ideation to assure her clients that there is hope. Smith reflects, "I think the human race's purpose is to help each other. Sometimes we indulge too much in ourselves that we don't help our community. That needs to change."

As an aspiring psychologist, Terrian Smith has found her crisis counselor experience invaluable. "Sometimes, it's just not about the money," she emphasizes. "Instead, it's about providing a listening ear to [people in] our community [who need it]."

By the way, Terrian called back her 12-year-old client the next day and was pleasantly surprised by how happy she sounded on the phone. What a difference a phone call can make!

Source:

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