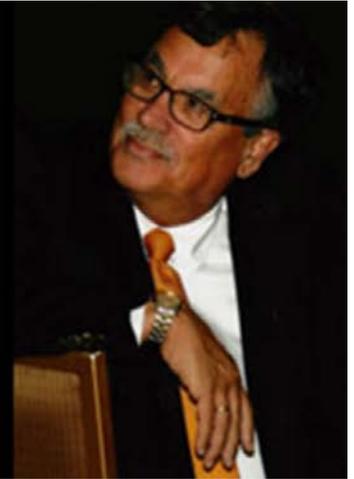


MY VIEW



Founder Wayne Fortin



BACK IN THE DAY

TIP began offering services 33 years ago this month. One word captures the history of TIP since its founding...**CHANGE**. For the last 33 years TIP has experienced one change after another. . . . TIP volunteers and TIP leaders have come and gone; new TIP Affiliates have been established; and technology and social media have transformed how we communicate with each other and with the communities we serve. In many ways we are a different organization today than we were 33 years ago. **BACK IN THE DAY....**

- TIP was operated by a mental health center.
- The TIP volunteer training manual was 7 stapled pages.
- All communication with the emergency system was done via pagers.
- A TIP Teens program didn't exist.
- The TIP Resource Guide given to clients was one typed page.
- Volunteers were recruited by posting flyers around the community.
- TIP was a partnership with local police departments. Fire departments and hospitals were not involved.

You get the idea. Someone who volunteered for TIP in 1985 would hardly recognize the organization today. But upon closer scrutiny, that volunteer would recognize that at its core, TIP is the same program today as it was at the beginning. This core is composed of the following elements

- Volunteers (not mental health professionals) are the TIP responders.
- An emphasis on care vs cure.
- High standards and expectations for volunteers.
- Commitment to rapid response on a 24/7 basis.
- A commitment to respond to 100% of requests for service regardless of the nature of the crisis.

- Emphasis on excellence in all areas.
- Strong partnerships with emergency responders.

In short, the core elements of TIP listed above were there from the beginning and are there today. We have managed to change and improve the organization without changing what makes TIP...TIP. Managing change is a messy and challenging process. Almost daily TIP leaders and volunteers struggle with what changes/improvements to adopt and which to reject.

As we move forward, managing change won't get any easier. Changes in society will require us to adapt to the fast-changing landscape, and the steady stream of suggestions from our constituents about how we can improve and change will continue.

Although managing change is not easy, I would like to propose a simple 3-part solution.

- First, we need to continually orient new TIP volunteers and leaders about the TIP WAY (the core elements listed above) and find ways to remember what is at our core.
- Second, we need to put TIP's core elements in a **DO NOT CHANGE** lockbox. As we decide what to change going forward we need to keep this lockbox locked.
- Finally, we should subject all future incoming ideas, demands and suggestions to this question.... ***“How will this proposed change enhance or weaken the essentials that at the heart of TIP?”***

It will be a bumpy road ahead as we deal with change. My hope is that we will continue to adapt, improve and innovate, as we have over the years. But I also hope that if someone who is a TIP volunteer today were to visit TIP 30 years from now they would quickly recognize below all the changes a familiar TIP - a group of community volunteers who are a highly trained “crack outfit” devoted to supporting survivors of tragedy.