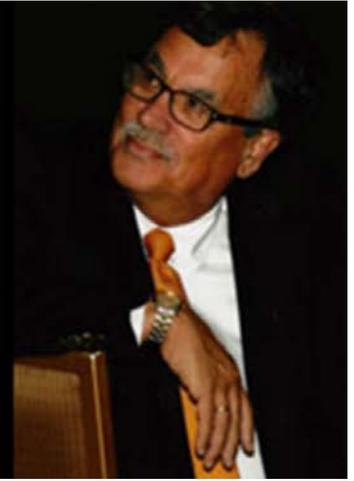


# MY VIEW



Founder Wayne Fortin



## WHY AM I SO TIRED?

When I debrief TIP volunteers after TIP Calls, I often hear: *"I was exhausted after the call and for all of the next day. I don't know why. I really didn't do anything."* When I hear this, I try to normalize the volunteer's exhaustion by letting them know *"it's very common for TIP Volunteers to feel exhausted after TIP calls. It sneaks up on you and you don't notice it until you get home."*

But why? After all, TIP calls don't involve physical exertion. I believe that the answer requires an appreciation of two challenges volunteers face on TIP calls....

First, for the 2 or 3 hours that volunteers are on TIP calls, they are *"strangers in a strange land"*. They are completely out of their comfort zone.

We live most of our everyday lives in our comfort zones...we know those around us and what we can expect of them, and we have routines and rituals which allow us to be on *"auto pilot"* much of the time.

There is nothing about getting to and being on a TIP call that is familiar or routine....

- .....finding the location of the TIP call can be challenging.
- .....everyone on the scene is a stranger.
- .....the situation continually changes.
- .....clients in shock are often unpredictable.

For these reasons and more volunteers need to be vigilant and *"on their toes"* the entire time they are on TIP calls. **Exhausting!**

Second, to do what we ask volunteers to do...meet the needs of the client...requires that the volunteer be intensely focused on the client for clues about what their needs are. The client's needs are often unclear. And even when the volunteer understands what the client's need(s) are, how to meet the needs is not always clear or even possible. In other words, much of a TIP call is a mystery that the volunteer is trying to understand and unravel....*"who is this person I'm trying to help?"; "what does this person need?"; "How am I going to meet this need for which there isn't an easy answer?"* **Exhausting!**

One of our primary concerns we all have in TIP is for the health and safety of TIP volunteers, including their emotional health. Those outside of TIP express the same concern. They ask: *"Aren't your volunteers traumatized by the awful situations they see?"* The answer is NO. We know that following TIP calls, even after the most tragic situations, volunteers get on with their lives without lasting emotional injuries.

But volunteers **are** affected by TIP calls in a way we don't often talk about. Many volunteers arrive home after TIP calls exhausted, and they wonder why. *"(I just stood around.)"*

As an organization, we need to let TIP volunteers (especially new volunteers) know they may experience exhaustion after TIP calls, and that it's common. Fortunately there is a simple cure: **REST!**