

On 31st March 2021 Martin Taylor retired from his position as Chair of Befrienders Worldwide after serving the maximum 3 terms totalling 9 years in the role. A special virtual presentation was made to Martin by BW Trustees past and present on 1st April 2021 to thank Martin for his exemplary role as Chair of BW and for his dedication to the BW organisation. As a tribute to Martin, we have included an article on Martin's time with BW which can be read on page 2.

Recruitment of a new Chair

BW Trustee David Brodtman has agreed to take on the role of Interim Chair until a new Chair is appointed. The selection process for the position of Chair commenced in January 2021 and is nearing conclusion.

There was a great response to the publicity of the role, and the selection group shortlisted, and interviewed a number of very talented candidates in April.

Following discussions, we're now awaiting ratification by the full board of trustees and look forward to being able to share more details very shortly.

The new Chair will be provided with a probationary period working with the Interim Chair before taking over when it feels appropriate for all concerned

We look forward to working with all those who applied in different areas of the organization in the future – watch this space!

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To contact us:

To submit articles or information for the newsletter, please contact
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Martin Taylor Befrienders Worldwide Chair August 2012 to March 2021



Martin became the first chair of Befrienders Worldwide in 2012, and since then has done an incredible amount of work to steer the organisation and its members into a future where outreach and connectivity have increased, and BW has become one of the leading international emotional support charities.

One of Martin's first priorities was to secure the Organisation's funding after support from the Samaritan's grant ended in 2014, and to build up the reserves to ensure a degree of financial stability.

Martin led the team that revised the membership guiding principles, which were originally based upon the Samaritan template, to adapt them to the realities of BW's membership profile around the world. This also included developing a vision and mission strategy and ensuring volunteer training material to was available to all members through the website.

Martin with the Board introduced a new brand identity, redeveloped the BW website including a full update of the contact details of all members. The Website is now attracting 2 million visitors a year.

Membership grew under Martin's tenure as Chair and included new members in Morocco, Bangladesh, Gibraltar, Moldova, Lebanon, Belgium, Philippines, Argentina, Kosovo, and Ecuador. The BW board also expanded to reflect the diversity of the organisation and now has nine (9) members from 5 countries around the world who meet online once every 2-months for Board meetings.

BW was able to hold its first regional conference as an Independent charity in Lithuania in 2018 which brought members from all over the world together. Over recent years, the newsletter publications have increased and highlighted some important developments for BW especially its new Help App which was launched in June 2020 and is available in eleven (11) languages. To date, it has been used in 189 countries.

Martin concluded a contract with a major shipping company in Singapore for a dedicated service to support seafarers and is currently working on plans to extend this service to the wider International seafaring community.

As Communications Director for BW, it has been my pleasure to work closely with Martin and to appraise him of developments from our members during our weekly meetings which, Martin never missed. Martin's remarkable understanding of the work undertaken by volunteers supporting people in emotional crisis and his ability to keep a very close watch on changing developments in the emotional support sector worldwide will make Martin a tough act to follow

The Board of Trustees is grateful that we will not be saying goodbye to Martin as he has kindly agreed to the request by the Board to be a BW Advisor.

We cannot end without expressing our grateful thanks to Martin's wife Sylvia for the enormous support she has given Martin over these last nine years as Chair-thank you so much Sylvia.

New members

BW warmly welcomes two new members to BW.

Community Help Services (CHS) Belgium



Anima EC- Guayaquil Ecuador



The President of Anima EC has informed BW that within 2-days of Anima-EC details being posted on the BW Help App, they have started to receive callers. This is great news.



Wellness at Work

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a massive change in our working lives. Working remotely can be challenging and isolating and the stress, uncertainties and demands of home and work life can take their toll on our mental health. Learn how to help protect your mental health during this difficult time.

By: **Eymi Teves**

In Touch Mental Health Volunteer

Experiencing a pandemic during this time takes a huge toll on our productivity. Not just for a single individual, but as a collective group. With the businesses getting temporarily shut down, the work is limited, and the stay-at-home orders, a lot of us will find ways on how to make our time worthwhile and productive amidst the noticeable fluctuations in our willpower and motivation.

There are times that we are very driven to reach the goals that we set for ourselves. It fires us up, it makes us restless, but this pandemic is a hindrance as we are limited in capacity to reach such goals. It makes us unsure of how we are even going to achieve them with the little things we can do.

Personally, I have been anxious for weeks and I kept thinking about what the future still holds for me. I mean, not that I am being a pessimist, it just worries me how life can never go back to what our usual routine would be - what our normal is will not be the same. We have to know all the possible outcomes and adjust for ourselves.



Image by Olena Sergienko via Unsplash

With that being said, there are ways that I do to help me focus. These are things that I personally do to keep myself motivated.

1. **Focus on the smaller things that matter.** Taking things one step at a time is proven to bring us closer to our general goal. If what you want to achieve is too broad, too big, or too overwhelming, try to adjust your goals focusing on breaking this big piece into smaller ones. Think of it as a ladder, you need to take small steps for you to reach the top - that is your goal. In that way, you get to celebrate the journey of achieving one piece at a time for you to complete the bigger picture.
2. **Know where your strengths and weaknesses lie.** It is vital for us to identify our problem areas to boost our confidence. Knowing where you lack makes it easier for you to know what to improve and what to retain. Work on the things that you are greatly insecure about and it will be a stepping stone on how you will up your skills and capabilities.
3. **Remind yourself that every journey is different.** As the saying goes, "One key does not fit all locks", it applies to reach the goals, as well. The path that others take might not work for you. Instill in yourself that everyone has their own timeline. Experiment and adjust on the things and behavior that work for you in achieving your goals. You do not have to copy someone else's because each of us is unique.
4. **Do not over-exert yourself.** Human beings are not machines. We should learn to breathe and stay in the moment from time to time. Being over-eager to finish your goal will just drain your motivation away instead of boosting it. Again, everything has its perfect timing. Practice mindfulness techniques to soothe your mind then get back to your task once you are calm enough. Be reminded that whatever you do will be greatly rewarding at the end.
5. **Commit to the goals you set for yourself.** Create a habit tracker of the things you want to achieve and stick to it. Make sure that what you wanted to reach is out of your heart, your own will, and not driven by outside forces like peer pressure and societal cues. This is to make sure that you will be held accountable for all the decisions you make in the future. You are also more likely to move and take action if you are committed to your goals.



Image by Emma Matthews Digital Content Production via Unsplash

6. **Stir away from self-criticisms.** We are already aware that as individuals, we should know our weaknesses, but never beat yourself so much for it. Be kind to yourself and practice self-compassion. Accept that you make mistakes from time to time. Take them as lessons and use them as the push you needed to complete your task to perfection.
7. **Take a break and practice the 10-minute rule to increase productivity.** This rule suggests taking a break after the 10-minute mark, then, internalize whether you want to keep going or to quit. Most often than not, your motivation will boost as you reach another 10 minutes of the task you are doing until you won't realize that it is near completion.
8. **Add a little fun to a dreadful task.** For example, listening to music while you are doing something. Boring tasks like typing or cleaning, perhaps, takes quite a negative toll on our motivation. If partnered with a task that you enjoy, however, you will see the difference in the initiative to do it.
9. **Remember to take care of your physical and mental health.** Drink the necessary amount of water needed each day and eat a balanced diet. You cannot perform any task effectively if you are sick, in pain, or distraught. Being healthy, of course, also include a sound mind. Instill it in ourselves that a person's mental health is as important as physical health.
10. **Treat yourself.** One of the factors that greatly affect our motivation is the reward. Give yourself even just a simple treat after completing a small task. This will make you anticipate the completion of everything that you needed to do. Do not, however, do a task just for the sake of completing it and getting a reward. This will only make you counterproductive.

How is Befrienders Worldwide helping people access emotional support?

Background:

Befrienders Worldwide have two websites with a large and growing following.

This gives us an unrivalled view of the people who are looking for emotional support around the world.

Our Websites

- a) <https://www.befrienders.org/>

This website – known as the *Befrienders Website*, was originally set up to allow users to search for help centres within their country and to access general information on what BW does including information on emotional support and how to go about setting up an emotional support centre.

- a) <https://help.befrienders.org/>

This latest website – known as the *Help App* will allow a user to directly find their physically nearest help centre with a few clicks on their mobile phone or laptop.

How do we find out who accesses our websites and what member help centres they are guided to?

Befrienders has been working with our IT supplier to produce a reporting system which will allow help centres to view how these Befrienders websites direct traffic to your help centres.

To get to this reporting system, click on this link: <https://cutt.ly/ojPCkd8>

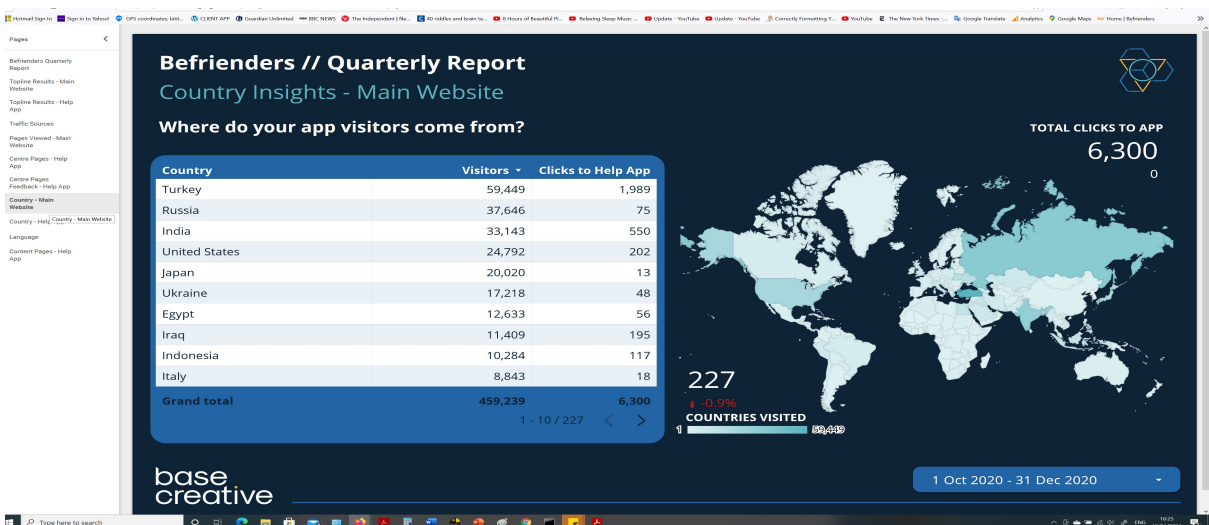
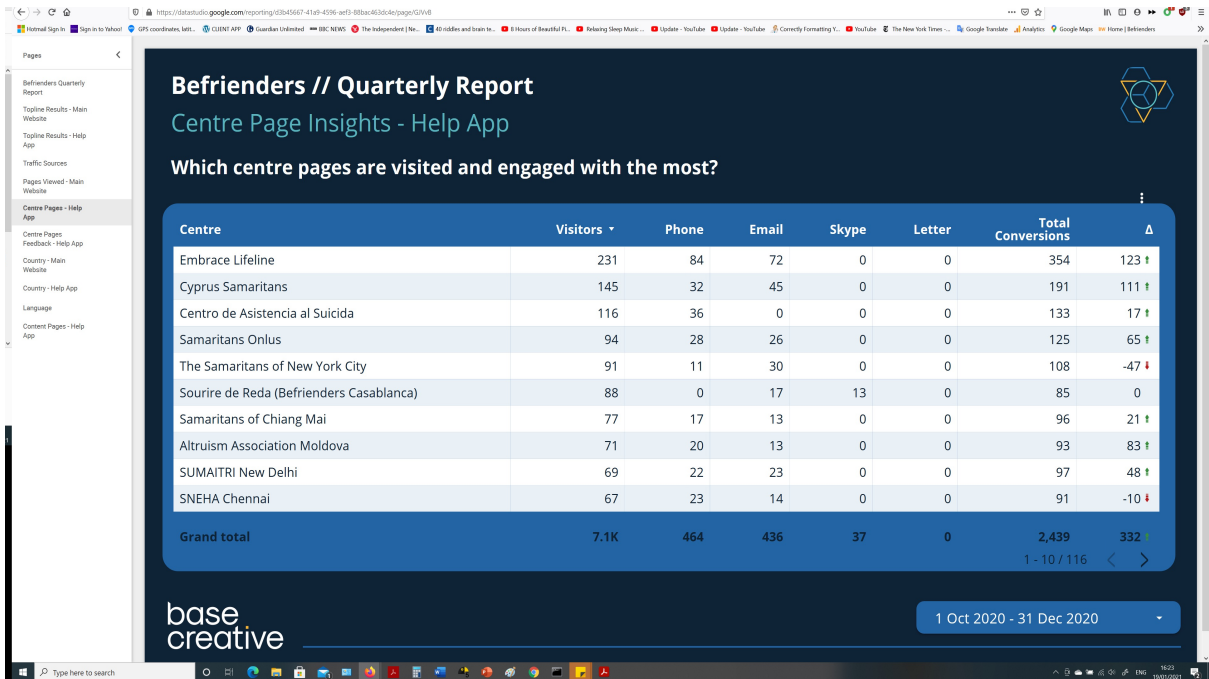
You will get this screen:



- a) In the bottom right corner you can specify the start date and end date for your query.
- b) The left column show the different reports available.

These are some of the questions that this reporting link will help you answer.

- How many users contact my help centre via the Website and the Help App
- What method do they use to connect with BW centres?
- Which countries use these websites the most?
- What web pages are accessed the most?



By using this data source BW centres can see for themselves their numbers and especially the impact that local campaigns can have by seeing the number of respondents going to their sites or making direct contact with the centres. We would welcome comments and feedback from our members on any additional information that can be provided to enhance your service delivery.

Sourire de Reda, Casablanca, Morocco, always mobilized to prevent youngsters' suicide

Since 2009, Sourire de Reda has been listening to youngsters aged 21 and less who are in suffering to avoid seeing them commit suicide. The NGO opted for peer-to-peer communication for more efficiency and relies greatly on social media.

At the eve of the national suicide prevention day celebrated on the 5th of February, Sourire de Reda who has been working for over a decade to mobilize around youngsters' suffering, underlines the importance of digitalization in suicide prevention. "We've been communicating through social media, and we intend on focusing more and more so on these channels by digitalizing all the service and the processes of the NGO to help reach youngsters more directly", explains Sourire de Reda's director, Myriam Bahri. She adds: "We also raise awareness among youngsters' through their peers by having teenagers intervene directly with kids and teenagers in pain. We find that this is the best way because kids and teenagers are more receptive to people their age who speak the same language and have the same interests".

The NGO has already tested the concept since it has put together a youngsters' committee that is recruited and trained to raise awareness among their peers. The NGO keeps on going with its activities for suicide prevention with the campaign "#ana-m3ak" that has been going on for two years now. "#ana_m3ak means I'm here with you, it is a strong message sent to the youngsters to let them know that their peers along with the adults are here to listen and help them whenever they feel down", underlines Myriam Bahri.



2000 received calls on the helpline during the first semester of the year 2020

The helpline Stop Silence run by Sourire de Reda has received 2000 calls between January and June 2020, which represents a rise of 78% compared to the same period of 2019.

326 of the 2000 calls received have been taken by the NGO's listeners. "These calls were from youngsters aged 21 or less and lasted around 50 mins each connecting a listener with a kid or teenager going through a suicidal crisis", explains Myriam Bahri, and insists that this service does not provide psychotherapeutic support in the long term but rather a punctual exchange to help the caller get over their suicidal crisis and work with them on a plan to feel better over time.

The helpline has three time slots, mid- day, evening and night, from Monday to Friday. "The lack of both human and financial resources is a huge obstacle to running the helpline 24/7", underlines Myriam Bahri.

At the psychiatric service in Casablanca, doctors have also observed a rise in the number of suicides during the confinement (lockdown) period from the 23th of March to the 10th of June compared to the previous months and that within the confinement, doctors observed 3 times more suicide attempts with 18 cases reported in 20 days.

Besides the statistics related to suicide attempts, Sourire de Reda considers that the helpline, Stop Silence, allowed the NGO to produce qualitative data. "The calls treated during this period have revealed several situations of anxiety that are specific to the confinement. They can be connected to the loss of a relative or a friend during this period, the fear of the virus, the sudden stop of psychological treatment or psychiatric medication or both, or confinement with abusive parents. All these situations can explain the rise of the number of suicide attempts during the peak of the pandemic".

Stop Silence listeners work primarily on evaluating the suicidal risk and follow a very strict listening protocol. The helpline registers an average 35% of the callers who have committed one or several suicide attempts during the year with 65% of the callers who have had suicidal thoughts without acting on them. The General Manager of Sourire de Reda, considers such quantitative and qualitative data should be consolidated by a national structure, namely a national observatory for suicide that will oversee the putting together of data coming from different institutions and NGOs.

BW Annual Returns

BW has launched its new Annual Returns using Google Forms as the means of recording and sending the data. The data for entry has been simplified and the process for sending has been made easier.

BW wants to get a better understanding of the data quality in order that we can get a better understanding of the impact of our organisation. Most of the data can be converted into charts for greater visual analysis which will allow trends to be determined.

BW will consider employing a PhD researcher to provide greater forensic analysis of the data. As soon as we have collated all the data, we will publish it anonymously.

Samaritans UK Core Development E-Learning training programme.

BW and Samaritans UK have had a number of meetings since the BW Global Webinar last November on the roll out of the Core Development E-Learning training programme.

Samaritans UK have informed BW that the E-Learning programme will be available for purchase in October 2021 after a review of the content by BW in September.

BW and Samaritans UK are currently finalizing the cost for the E-Learning license and working on the most efficient way to handle the invoicing process.

