

**On the Line// SOS Help I ends an ear// 35 years of listening/: feeling down?  
Call us up!**

Well you may be surprised to know that SOS Help Listeners have been providing emotional support to Anglophones in France for almost 35 years. Co-founded in Paris in 1974 by Chad Varah of the Samaritans, we are part of the SOS Amitié Federation, with links to the Samaritans.

Our aim is to provide compassionate, anonymous, confidential and skilled listening to anyone who needs to talk about any issue he or she is facing, and who prefers to speak in English.

SOS Help Listeners are trained in Active Listening; that is, we learn techniques in listening effectively. We don't stay silent, but respond with empathy. We don't judge, but listen and encourage further exploration to hopefully lead the caller to discover his or her own way out of their difficulty - and to regain their perspective. Callers clearly know more about themselves and their situation than we can ever know. The problem is they've got stuck along the way and believe, rightly or wrongly, that they have no one else to turn to who will really listen and be of help. Sometimes just being there is the best and only thing we provide. It can be enough.

Life comes with its regular challenges and being in France does not change that - in fact being in a different environment with another language can make them more difficult. Many callers are under significant stress or in conflict. They may feel isolated and unable to share their concerns with friends or family. They could have a health problem. Perhaps a loved one, perhaps their only loved one, has died or is gravely ill. Maybe there is a work problem, harassment, no job or fear of no job. Maybe a lover has gone, leaving the caller stranded physically, emotionally, or financially. Maybe they are continuing to live in a relationship of conflict and need to talk it through. Often callers are frustrated, depressed, worried or anxious.

Since the changes in telephone tariffs, we are available for the cost of a call at 'local' rates to callers from all over France. They know they'll find a caring listener volunteer on the line who speaks English and lives in France.

There are thousands of English-speaking expats in France. It comes as no surprise that so many people would relocate to such a lovely country. But among all the clinking of wine glasses are people who are feeling a little down. If that's you, give us a call. We'd love to help.

SOS Help 01 46 21 46 46 from 3 to 11pm every day.

[www.soshelpline.org](http://www.soshelpline.org)

SOS Help self-funding. Last year, our two sales of donated English books brought in over 10,000€! The rest of our budget of around 18,000€ is provided by our generous private, Association and Church donors. We provide fiscal tax receipts to French tax payers (66% deductible)  
Our next book sale will be held on:-

Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup>  
From 12 noon to 4pm

At:  
St Joseph's Church  
50 avenue Hoche  
75008 Paris M° Etoile

Books priced at 1€ for paperbacks and 2€ for hardbacks  
Enjoy our homemade snacks at the coffee corner

You can sign up on our website: [www.soshelpline.org](http://www.soshelpline.org) to receive our bulletin for news of our fundraisers and our recruitment sessions.