



SENIOR TALK LINE

REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS

What do volunteers for the Senior Talk Line do?

The main activity of Senior Line volunteers is calling seniors and the caregivers of seniors and visiting with them over the telephone to provide them with social contact and support. These are generally social visits and the volunteers and seniors really develop a connection and "phone friendship." Senior Talk Line volunteers also provide short-term supportive counseling, crisis intervention and referrals to senior citizens and/or their caregivers. Examples of problems may include depression, loneliness and isolation, grief, independent living, health and phase of life challenges.

Must I have any special training or experience in order to apply?

No. Although professional counselors and therapists do sometimes volunteer their time at the Crisis Center, most volunteers are not professional helpers. In fact, a strong distinction exists between the type of work done by volunteer counselors and that of professionals.

What are the requirements that I must meet before making an application?

You must be a high school graduate at least 18 years old with a genuine interest in helping others. You must not be currently receiving services provided by any Crisis Center program. Mental health consumers must be emotionally ready to assist others and be no less than a year past their own crisis experience.

What's involved in the screening process?

You will be asked to complete an oral and/or written exercise and be interviewed by professional staff member(s). The entire process takes about an hour. Some of the qualities screened for include emotional maturity, dependability, stability, absence of harsh or judgmental attitudes, and personal insight. Information on your application will be verified by a background check. All of the information you give us is held confidential.

What happens if I am selected to volunteer?

Once accepted, volunteers will receive approximately 5 hours of training. Evaluation of your progress is ongoing throughout the entire training period.

What's expected of me once I finish training?

Because the Crisis Center makes a considerable investment in training our volunteers, a minimum commitment of one year's service from the date of graduation is asked from each volunteer in return. Senior Talk Line volunteers are asked work a three hour shift in the phone room every week. Shifts are scheduled to meet individual needs and preferences. Shifts are available from 9am until 9pm seven days a week. Volunteers are expected to hold all information about calls in the strictest confidence.