

Crisis Line Responder Volunteer (ages 18+) Job Description

Our highly trained volunteers provide confidential support to callers and chatters through our crisis line services. As a Crisis Line Responder Volunteer, you use tools and skills acquired through training and continuous feedback to offer service users support, crisis intervention, and appropriate referrals to programs within Distress Centre and the community. Our volunteers must be able to demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in changing situations including taking calls, managing multiple chats, and covering peer-support services. We support volunteers in staying current with the latest best practices, policies, and procedures. Volunteers are expected to complete accurate and timely documentation on all service user contacts to allow follow-up and/or evaluations by the staff.

Duties & Responsibilities

- Providing immediate and confidential crisis phone, text, and chat support, in consultation with Contact Centre Coordinators and agency staff.
- Follow agency policy and procedures – particularly around confidentiality and suicide risk assessment.
- Provide information and referrals to Distress Centre programs and community organizations.
- Using skills developed in training, address risk factors including, but not limited to, suicide, child safety, self-harm, and domestic violence.
- Document all service user contacts in an accurate and timely manner per Distress Centre procedures
- Answer calls for partnership lines including Mobile Response Team, Senior Connect, and others as required
- Connect with a Distress Centre Mentor to give and receive developmental feedback at regular (monthly) intervals

Qualifications & Requirements

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills including active listening, empathy, and patience
- Ability to remain calm, use sound judgement, and follow agency protocol in a crisis
- Strong ability to work both independently and within team environments
- Demonstrated self-awareness in areas such as coping, stress-management and emotions

- Ability to provide and receive developmental feedback in a constructive and respectful way
- Demonstrates respect for diverse values, identities and beliefs, and approaches all callers with non-judgment, openness and cultural humility
- Willing and able to follow Distress Centre Calgary policies and procedures
- Must be over 18 years of age for the Crisis Lines, or between the ages of 15-20 to be a ConnecTeen Volunteer

Emotional Readiness

Prioritizing the well-being of both our service users and our volunteers is essential to us. Because crisis work can be emotionally demanding, we ask applicants who are currently processing recent personal trauma or major life events to reflect on whether this is the right time to begin this role. We are available to talk through any questions about readiness during the application process.

Time Requirements

There is an expected commitment of 200 hours in the first year. Shift times range from start times at 6:00am and end times at 11:00pm.

There will be occasions where, due to unforeseen circumstances, the volunteer may need to stay past the formal shift end time.

Technological Competencies

- Basic navigation of Windows or Mac OS
- Office 365 (SharePoint, Outlook, Teams)
- Have home computer set up to manage multiple tabs and programs at once, for training purposes.
- Adequate and stable internet connection
- Confidential working space
- Working headset and microphone

Orientation & Training

Our volunteers do not need prior knowledge or experience in crisis support. Distress Centre Calgary offers comprehensive training to all new volunteers in topics including, but not limited to: crisis and suicide intervention, youth issues, grief & loss, mental health, communication skills, addictions,

domestic abuse, diversity and inclusion, and our community partnerships. Volunteers will complete a series of online self-paced modules and attend in-person classroom sessions.

Formal training is followed by supervised shifts where trainees support service users in our contact Centre, with the support of a trained coach. All volunteers go through a minimum of three coaching shifts. Flexibility is required to ensure coaching shifts are completed in a timely manner.

Note: Volunteers-in-training are expected to attend **all** classroom sessions for the training session they apply for and are accepted into.

Location

- Shifts take place at Distress Centre Calgary: Suite 500, 999 8th Street SW. Distress Centre Calgary is wheelchair accessible with one accessible parking stall available at our building.
- Parking is provided for volunteers when they are on the lines, once they have completed all training requirements.

What You Can Expect

- Receive regular feedback and development from peers and supervisors
- Be paired with a Distress Centre Calgary mentor to provide support and guidance
- Be trained and supported in effectively de-escalating crisis and high stress situations
- Make a tangible difference in others' lives
- Develop your communication and social skills
- Be part of a supportive team and create lasting friendships
- Receive a reference letter upon completion of your 200-hour commitment (upon request)

What We Expect

- Volunteers to communicate with their mentors/ supervisors & agency
- Volunteers to adhere to their 200-hour commitment