

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who can be a referee on my application form?

We find that employers can provide us with more relevant feedback than friends. Please don't use a family member for reference. Other ideas for referees are: counsellor, teacher, church minister, work colleague, business client.

If you have come from overseas recently we can email or telephone referees in other countries. Otherwise provide us with someone who can describe your character even if this is from a few years back.

If this continues to be difficult, complete what you can and send in your application form.

What happens on selection day?

Selection day is an opportunity to meet you and share with you details about the organisation and its role in our community. It also provides you with the opportunity to ask any questions you might have before being considered for training to be a LifeLine Telephone Counsellor. The selection process will consist of a number of exercises throughout the day.

What is the training like?

The training is delivered by an external Trainer who is qualified in either counselling or social work and is a full member of their relevant local practicing association.

The training is based on experiential adult learning practices and involves a variety of different formats that keep participants engaged including small groups, skill exercises, role-plays, games, and brainstorms. This generates comments from University students such as,

"Great Experience. This training should be a part of counselling / psychology training for all universities because this learning and environment is vastly superior to any course at university - either undergraduate or postgraduate level."

Training is broken down into 1/3 skills training, 1/3 theory, 1/3 self awareness, and covers:

- 1) Microcounselling
- 2) Self awareness and Values exercises
- 3) Models / Counselling theories including Transactional Analysis and Problem solving.
- 4) Specific training issues e.g. grief, suicide, psychiatric disability.
- 5) Community referrals
- 6) Homework - observation and practice.

What are the training standards like?

Lifeline Waikato exceeds the National LifeLine Standards for training. We have a dedicated Training team and we train people so that we can deliver a high quality and effective counselling service. The training is respected within the community, a recommended prerequisite for several tertiary counselling programmes, and a recognised stepping stone for people changing careers and retraining in community and mental health work.

What is the training workload?

This 10 week training programme is intense and will have a noticeable impact on your time and focus. You will accomplish a lot during this time, acquiring and fine-tuning new communication skills that will be effective for the rest of your life. So you will need to commit your time and energy to this process.

Do I need to attend every training session?

Yes. Every session is important.

However you may have prior commitments or become sick during the training, so there is leeway to catch-up on missed sessions. Due to the importance of group bonding and learning the basic skills, attending sessions 1-4 is essential. Please let us know if you have any prior commitments in your application form.

It is also essential that you are available in Waikato immediately after the training to start as a volunteer. This time offers the best opportunity for integrating your new skills.

I can't make this next training. When is the next training?

There are two LifeLine trainings each year. Applications close 2 weeks prior to the training beginning. If you have been accepted on the current training you can transfer this to the next training.

What do I need to commit to as a Volunteer Counsellor?

To train and become a LifeLine Counsellor you will need to commit to providing your volunteer time after the training. We have set a standard that is the same for everyone who applies to LifeLine. This requirement of three shifts (each shift is 3-4 hours long) volunteering as a LifeLine Counsellor each month allows you to maintain your competency as a Counsellor, develop your skills further and maintain the professional standards and ethics necessary within the counselling profession.

So your commitment is to:

- Up to three shifts per month of telephone counselling - including one weekend or overnight shift.
- A minimum of 2 years volunteering, learning and developing as a LifeLine Counsellor after the training.
- Attendance at a 90 minute Supervision Group each month. (These are led by an external supervisor and provides Counsellors with debriefing, training and support).
- Attends at least 10 hours of on-going training workshops per year.
- Additional skill development and training as required.

What is the multi-tiered support structure for Counsellors?

LifeLine has several ways of providing ongoing training, debriefing and support to LifeLine Counsellors after training. These are:

- Peer supervision while on shift with another LifeLine Counsellor
- An open-door policy from LifeLine's Director in office hours
- 24 hour professional staff support by telephone for debriefing and crisis intervention
- A monthly supervision group led by our supervisors from the community. Attendance at these monthly supervisions is compulsory and essential for maintaining counselling standards and ethics.

