

CIS Volunteer Training

Frequently Asked Questions

988

SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

What qualifications are needed to volunteer?

There is no single set of skills or experiences that qualify someone to volunteer with us. Our training is comprehensive and will provide the needed information. Some characteristics that align well are kindness, empathy, an ability to withhold judgment and opinions, and openness to feedback. Volunteers commit to one 4-hour shift per week after training.

How is the training delivered?

The first stage of training is a 6-week class, held either via Zoom or in office, on Monday and Thursday evenings from 6-9 pm. This class includes self-paced work to be completed between meetings. Trainees should expect this to be the most time-intensive portion of training and plan for 10-12 hours of work per week.

How long does the training process take?

After the initial 6-week class, volunteers enter live training, either in person or via Zoom. Trainees begin this stage by learning about our phone system, documentation, and available supports, then spend about 12 hours listening in on live contacts with a trainer. In the final stage, volunteers spend about 16 hours taking contacts while a trainer listens in, with the goal of demonstrating readiness to take calls on their own. With a consistent 4 hours per week, volunteers can finish the live training and start answering contacts alone in about 2 months.

Does the training process really need to take that long?

It does, and we don't ask this huge commitment lightly. Remember that, at the end of volunteer training, are conversations with people who are in a wide variety of difficult circumstances - some being life-threatening. We want to make sure you're as prepared as possible for anything that comes up and we're willing to spend the time needed to do so.

Be the lifeline.

Need to talk?

Call or text 988 or chat at 988sc.org.
988 is for anyone, at any time, for any reason.