

How to Become a Crisis Text Line Crisis Counselor

Becoming a Crisis Text Line Crisis Counselor is a great way to help people in need. Additionally, it offers you an opportunity to get volunteer hours and build your resume. As a Crisis Counselor, you'll help people who are going through a...

Training to Be a Crisis Counselor



Check that you meet the requirements to be a counselor. Most people can become a Crisis Text Line Crisis Counselor if they're focused on helping others. However, there are a few requirements to be a volunteer to make sure that those in crisis get the best help possible. Make sure you fit these requirements before you sign up. To be a Crisis Text Line volunteer, you need to meet the following requirements:^[1]

1. You must have a U.S. social security number if you're in the U.S.
2. You must be at least 18-years-old.
3. You must submit 2 references.
4. You must have access to a reliable personal computer and the internet.

Tip: Make sure you're ready for the demands placed on Crisis Counselors. Most people who text the line are dealing with a very difficult situation or a serious mental illness. You may handle clients who are dealing with topics like self harm, rape, and depression. Be prepared to help people who are in serious need of support.

2.



Visit the Crisis Text Line homepage to sign up as a volunteer. The Crisis Text Line offers you training once you're accepted as a prospective volunteer. Go to their website to learn more about the service and to sign up to be a Crisis Counselor. From there, you can begin your training.^[2]

1. You can access the website here: <https://www.crisistextline.org/>

3.



Click on the 'volunteer' button to access an application. Once you're on the Crisis Text Line website, you'll see a menu bar at the top of the page. Select 'volunteer' to open the page for volunteering. You'll see more information about becoming a volunteer, as well as a 'get started' button. Click on 'get started' to open the application.^[3]

1. The volunteer page is easy to access here: <https://www.crisistextline.org/volunteer>

4.



Complete the application to become a Crisis Text Line volunteer. Enter your name, email, phone number, birthday, and a password. Click the 'submit' button to send the application to the Crisis Text Line. Then, they'll collect more information as needed to complete the application process.

5.



Consent to a background check. Before you can volunteer on the platform, Crisis Text Line requires you to do a background check. This helps them ensure that volunteers don't have a history that could disqualify them from becoming a counselor. Give the organization permission to check your background.^[4]

1. The background check will verify that you don't have a criminal history that might prevent you from working as a Crisis Counselor.

6.



Complete the 30-hour Crisis Counselor training course. Training courses start every 2 weeks, and you'll participate as part of a training cohort. Space is limited, but Crisis Text Line will get you in a training cohort as quickly as possible. Do your training at your own pace from your personal computer.^[5]

1. You have a choice between doing a 6-week course or a 15-day course. Both courses present the same material.
2. Crisis Text Line will likely match you with a coach who will guide you through training. They can answer any questions you have and help you get through the material.

Volunteering for Crisis Text Line

1.



Begin working as a Crisis Counselor as soon as you finish training. Once your training is complete, you're eligible to work as a Crisis Counselor. Go onto the platform to take your first shift. Sign up for the next available shift that works for your schedule.^[6]

1. Make sure you're on the site when you say you will be. Otherwise, people in crisis may not have a counselor available to help them.

2.



Schedule and complete your shifts on the Crisis Text Line platform. Shifts are typically scheduled in 2-hour blocks. Visit the platform and sign up for the shifts you can take. Put your shifts on your calendar so you won't forget.^[7]

1. It's okay to work 2 shifts in a row. However, pay attention to your personal mental health. You might get overwhelmed if you volunteer for too long.
2. You can't work shifts that are shorter than 2 hours.

3.



Keep your personal life to yourself during texts. It's important to keep the conversation focused on the person who's in crisis. Don't inject your personal life, politics, religion, or other beliefs into the chat. If you do, you might be dismissed as a volunteer.^[8]

1. Remember that what works for you won't necessarily help someone else. Rely on your training to help the people who text the crisis line, not your personal beliefs.



Spend at least 4 hours a week helping people in crisis. The Crisis Text Line expects volunteers to donate at least 4 hours of their time on the platform each week. Track your time so you meet your 4 hour goal. Additionally, give more of your time if you can so you're able to help more people in crisis.^[9]

1. To reach your weekly goal, complete at least 2 2-hour shifts each week.
2. For your protection, don't volunteer more than 12 hours a week, as you might get overwhelmed.

Tip: Crisis Text Line asks volunteers to complete a minimum of 200 hours. Ideally, you'll meet your 200-hour goal in 1 year.

5.



Volunteer between 10:00 p.m. EST and 6:00 a.m. EST if you can. While you can volunteer at any time of the day, demand for the Crisis Text Line increases in the late hours. Unfortunately, many people struggle to get through the night. If your schedule allows, volunteer during these hours so that you can help people in need.^[10]

1. The Crisis Text Line can still use your help at other times of the day. However, you might encounter more people in need of your help if you donate your time at night.

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