

24-HOUR CRISIS HOTLINE

Definition	Short-term, direct crisis intervention assistance available to survivors and co-survivors through a 24-hour crisis line with a Qualified Advocate; this line operates via telephone at minimum and may also operate via text or online chat
Goal	To provide the survivor or co-survivor with the appropriate telephone-based advocacy, support, information, resources, and options to help effectively address their needs
Minimum Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects survivors of sexual violence to a Qualified Advocate in a timely manner, within 30 minutes of the call, even if the line serves dual purposes • A Qualified Advocate remains on the call as needed to appropriately and effectively assist the caller • RAINN-registered and thus accessible via toll-free number • Accessible to all survivors, including those with limited English proficiency and the Deaf and hard of hearing • Compliant with the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and access is provided through telephone interpretation or video relay • Provides information, resources, acute intervention, and safety planning to all callers as appropriate • Does not require survivors to give information to access services • Provides the choice for survivors to remain anonymous if they wish

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Program Checklist

"Crisis line staff" refers to both paid staff and volunteers

1. Staffing

- Crisis line staff receive a minimum of 40 hours of training, which includes role-plays and observation of experienced workers, as well as 30 hours of continued education every two years thereafter, and are supervised by a coordinator or staff member with at least one year of experience working with survivors
- New crisis line staff are observed answering calls for feedback and training purposes
- Crisis line staff have immediate access to their supervisor or another experienced crisis line staff person for the support they may need while answering calls
- Crisis line staff and volunteers have opportunities to meet with and ask questions of the crisis line coordinator or supervisor at least monthly
- Survivors are connected to a Qualified Advocate as soon as possible and within 30 minutes, if the Program's crisis line serves dual purposes (such as domestic violence services)
- Any answering service utilized:
 - Connects survivors with a Qualified Advocate within 30 minutes
 - Has a written protocol detailing their instructions in responding to a crisis-line call
 - Has a detailed confidentiality policy
 - Receives the required Qualified Advocate training to properly assist callers
 - Receives an opportunity for answering service staff to meet with and ask questions of the crisis line coordinator or supervisor at least monthly
- The Program has a protocol for crisis line staff forwarding the line to their home or cell phone, stating:
 - Only the crisis line staff will respond to calls while calls are forwarded
 - The crisis line staff must respond to calls in a private area where the conversation will not be overheard by others or interrupted by noise/intrusions
 - Phone systems that would interfere with calls or compromise confidentiality will not be used
- At all times, except when forwarded to an answering service (see above), at least one staff member or volunteer has primary responsibility to answer the crisis line and at least one staff member or volunteer is

assigned as back-up

2. Access

- Available 24 hours/day and is RAINN registered
- Free to use through toll-free numbers and/or the RAINN crisis line
- Accessible to all survivors by having a language line available as well as utilizing video phone, relay telephone services, Text Telephone (TTY), online chat or texting, or other assistive technology for callers who may be Deaf or hard of hearing; and staff are trained on offering and using the available technologies
- Available to callers who wish not to identify themselves to crisis line staff

3. Policies

The Program establishes policies regarding:

- Guidelines on confidentiality
- The privacy of callers' phone numbers, and the privacy of staff phone numbers, if calling the survivor or co-survivor from a personal phone (i.e. caller I.D. blocking)
- How crisis line staff should respond to certain scenarios, such as:
 - Cases in which the caller appears to present a danger to self or others or appears to present a serious risk to the crisis line staff
 - Calls which are difficult, complex, or upsetting to the crisis line staff
 - Any situations that may involve law enforcement
- Receiving complex calls, including specific training and supervision for new crisis line staff and updating crisis line staff about current, common complex calls
- Identifying when crisis line staff must contact a supervisor
- Responding to calls, including safety assessment, emotional support, problem solving, provision of information and resources, conclusion, and evaluation
- Safely getting in contact with the survivor after a call, if needed
- Reporting procedures that require crisis line staff to report the nature of call(s) received to the appropriate person on the day following a crisis line call
- The documentation of needs identified during the call, response of crisis line staff, resources provided, and any caller feedback/evaluation
- Crisis line staff and their status as mandated reporters as well as any program guidelines regarding mandated reporting requirements
- Refusal of crisis line service to persons who are harassing crisis line advocates

- Restrictions for people who place repeat calls that impede the availability of the line for other callers, and offering appropriate resources, including external, to those callers
- Responding to calls for appointments or business matters (if applicable) and referring those calls to the program business line
- The duration of individual calls, which should be limited to 60 minutes
- If a caller requests or appears to need further assistance or clinical intervention, resources are offered for licensed counseling staff or other mental health agencies

4. Resources

The Program:

- Maintains an updated resource manual or file with financial, healthcare, mental health, culturally specific, social service, and other resources
- Updates the manual/file annually to:
 - Confirm that listings are current and accurate
 - Provide an opportunity to solicit feedback from community agencies regarding the appropriateness of connecting survivors with those agencies
- Makes resources available in accessible formats such as braille, large print, audio format, digital files that can be sent to callers via email, and more

5. Evaluation

The Program:

- Tallies the number of calls and hours of service on a regular basis (recommended monthly), per program policy, in order to assess trends, service utilization, and other outcomes
- Reviews call reports for accuracy and appropriateness of responses and resources provided
- Assesses their accessibility for persons with disabilities and the capacity to which the program is adhering to the ADA Title III
- Has a protocol for additional evaluation through any combination of the following:
 - Permission for follow-up phone calls to survivors to assist or support the survivor and document their assessment of the value or results of the original call
 - Supervision of crisis line staff, such as review of caller responses to specific calls and/or observation by supervisor of crisis line staff
 - Written evaluation from callers who later receive other direct services
 - Periodic surveying as to training and continuing education needs

- Sends annual surveys to agencies listed as resources and requests feedback about appropriateness of connecting survivors with those agencies; the Program communicates with these agencies regularly throughout the year to assess service delivery needs
- Appoints a crisis line coordinator or supervisor to gather information from evaluations and make recommended changes as needed