

F.A.Q./Talking Points with Potential Volunteers

Q. What is a day in the phone room like?

A. There's no such thing as a "typical" day in the phone room. Every shift varies from the volume of calls, the type of calls (referral v. listening), and what kind of issues the callers have that day. There are days where you may only get 1 or 2 calls an hour, and others where you get 30 calls in a 4 hour shift! The variety of experience is one of the best aspects of volunteering with CONTACT.

Q. How do I make a referral?

A. With our training, you'll learn to ask the right questions and use keywords to find appropriate referrals in the caller's zip code. You'll practice giving referrals during trainings by be given scenarios, looking up an appropriate referral, and having the referrals evaluated by our staff. You'll continue to sharpen your referral skills the more you're on the phones.

Q. What will training be like?

A. Training consists of once a week classes for 8 weeks, totaling for 35 hours. Some will be lecture style, learning about the practices and procedures of CONTACT, different mental health issues like suicide and substance abuse, and building the foundation for skills like active listening and information and referral. You will also practice the skills of looking up referrals on the computers and simulate listening calls with staff and your fellow class members. After classroom training, you'll need to complete 20

hours of apprenticeship, which means shadowing a current experienced volunteer and getting comfortable using the phones.

Q. What is the time commitment?

A. We ask all our volunteers to commit for 12 hours a month for one year. We're very flexible with scheduling and we'll never have a conflict with your work schedule. If you would like a fixed schedule (working the same shifts on the same days every month), that can be arranged with our director. Our shifts look like this:

1 – 7 am to 11 am

2a – 11 am to 1 pm

2b – 1 pm to 3 pm

3a – 3 pm to 5 pm

3b – 5 pm to 7 pm

4 – 7 pm to 11 pm

5 – 11 pm to 7 am

Q. What kind of calls will I receive?

A. With our training, you'll learn to ask the right questions and use keywords to find appropriate referrals in the caller's zip code. You'll practice giving referrals during trainings by be given scenarios, looking up an appropriate referral, and having the referrals evaluated by our staff. You'll continue to sharpen your referral skills the more you're on the phones.