



Vancouver Island
Crisis Society

Crisis Line Responder Volunteer Training: FAQ

How do I prepare for the interview?

Your resume, which was submitted at time of application will be reviewed and three references requested if moving forward for consideration.

We welcome people with their own lived experience of crisis. It is, however, important that you are no longer in crisis and now and have some distance and perspective on those events in your life. This is to ensure the safety of both the service user and yourself and to prevent further trauma.

The interview is designed to determine if you are a fit for the organization and if we are a fit for you. We are looking for traits like your natural ability to engage in conversation, empathy, and healthy boundary setting skills.

Interview questions will include the following questions to explore reasons for wanting to volunteer as well as examples of personal experiences which support your interest in working with the Vancouver Island Crisis Society.

Has it been at least one year since you have experienced a major life event such as death, divorce, addiction, or mental illness?

Has it been at least one year since you reached out to a crisis line to obtain support for yourself?

What does training look like?

The 7-week training is facilitated by experienced in-house instructors. Material is presented in person at our Nanaimo Training Centre using a variety of media: PowerPoint slide shows, video, and audio. Volunteers are expected to review material and participate in role play practice and complete a final knowledge quiz. Subjects will cover a variety of topics including active listening, mental health disorders, child abuse reporting, and suicide prevention.

How long will training take?

Training runs for approximately 7 weeks, followed by mandatory observation and support shifts to be completed within 30 days. Volunteers should expect to sign up for at least one 4-hour shadow/observation shift and four 4-hour supported phone shifts before solo shifts begin.

How do I pay my training fees?

Pay via [etransfer\(at\)vicrisis.ca](mailto:etransfer@vicrisis.ca) or pay via [PayPal](#).

Do you operate during public holidays?

Yes, the crisis line is open 24/7, serving the public and filling the gaps when other services are often not available. Crisis can happen anytime. Volunteers can fill critical shift gaps when staffing is impacted by holidays

How do I schedule for shifts?

Once you've completed basic training, you will be provided access to our scheduling system. The online shift scheduling allows you to select your shifts in 4- to 8-hour blocks days and weeks ahead based on your availability.

Minimum shift expectations are 20 hours a month

What if my schedule changes and I need to change a shift?

You must notify on call staff if the change affects a shift within 7 days. This allows sufficient time to arrange for coverage and continue to meet minimum staffing levels.

What is the work environment like?

The phone room environment is a small casual call centre-style with individual computer workstations. Lighting is low and supports an open concept team environment.