

Graduate Intern Counseling Program

Help Center Intern Job Description (Updated Spring 2024)

BACKGROUND: The Intern Counseling Program was born out of a need in the community. Our desire is to create another option for low-income and underinsured folks to receive counseling without the burden of expense. In addition, we found that many of our volunteers were seeking masters-level internships and wanted to continue with their Help Center work. We work closely with the MSU Graduate Counseling program and have also worked with online schools such as Prescott, Capella, Waldorf, Liberty, Widener, and Walla Walla. Interns receive Individual and Group supervision from an LCPC on our staff as is required by their graduate program or the state. Interns keep track of their own hours.

PURPOSE: To provide counseling to the under-insured in our community and to provide a venue for Master's level counseling students to procure hours for their internship while fulfilling this need.

QUALIFICATIONS: Graduate interns must be currently enrolled in a graduate program. In general, our preference is that they already be an adept volunteer or staff at the Help Center, having gone through our hotline training and ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and become quite comfortable working the hotline and taking suicide calls and walk-ins. *This generally takes at least 3-6 months, so preparing for this long before the internship starts is preferable.*

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Intern responsibilities fall into one of two categories:

Volunteer Graduate Interns:

- Must maintain one voluntary 4-hour, hotline shift per week. While 4 hours a week is the minimum, Graduate Interns generally need more hours than that and are welcome to volunteer more than one shift per week as needed to fulfill their school requirements.
- Assist staff with whatever the hotline needs might be for that day, including answering hotlines as needed, making Telecare and/or Follow-up calls.
- Must be willing to take 'walk-in' assessments as their schedule allows.
- Will be assigned clients as they become available, mostly through our hotline calls.
- Will be paid the stipend (\$15/hr) for their client contacts, meetings, group facilitation and supervision that falls outside of their volunteer shift.

Paid Staff Interns:

- Maintain 6.5, 12-hour shifts on the staff calendar, including night shifts and staff meetings. They are paid a salary, separate from the stipend, and expected to fulfill the

hours required for the salary. This generally works out to be plenty of non-direct hours for most school requirements.

- Be willing to take walk-in clients as their schedule allows.
- Will be assigned clients as they become available, mostly through hotline calls.
- Will attempt to schedule clients and supervision during their paid hotline shifts with the help of experienced volunteers.
- Will be paid the Intern stipend (\$15/hr) for client contacts, additional meetings, group facilitation and any supervision that falls outside of their normal salaried position.

AVAILABILITY AND COMMUNICATION: Because of *the crisis nature* of our program, all counseling Interns must consider being very available to respond to spontaneous requests from the Help Center. The Hotline workers are trained to call the Intern first when there is an immediate need (walk-in, shift coverage, assistance with busy phones or outreach). Interns must be fully integrated into our communication system and avail themselves to client needs on a fairly spontaneous and immediate basis. In other words, responding within 5-30 minutes to a text message request, or within a couple hours to email requests is necessary. We realize that school and other job schedules might take precedence over Help Center immediate needs. But it is important that Interns at least respond quickly so HC can move forward with other arrangements.

Call reports are used to communicate with each other about client issues as well as admin issues and necessary for keeping abreast of ongoing hotline issues. Therefore, they must be read weekly even if Intern is not in the building.

NOTEKEEPING: While the HC requires all contacts to be recorded in their online software, iCarol, complete notes of the Interns' client sessions are NOT encouraged. Instead, the Intern Counselor is encouraged to keep their own notes either on the HC secure hard drive, on their own secure laptop, or in traditional hard copy folders.

AUDIO RECORDING: The Help Center does not require Interns to audio/video record all of their sessions. However, most school programs will require at least one or two recorded sessions. In this case, the HC supervisor will listen to said recordings and provide feedback. Sometimes, the HC Supervisor will ask the counselor to record a session, but in general it is not a requirement for all sessions.

SUPERVISION: Interns will receive the required number of hours per client hours that are required by their program. It is the Intern's responsibility to be completely informed as to what this means and make that arrangement with the HC supervisor. The HC supervisor offers at least 1 hour of individual supervision per week, which is generally enough to fulfill school requirements. They are also available for spontaneous consultation as needed. The Intern is invited to attend Group supervision. This takes place on Wednesdays at 11:30 and can go for 1-3 hours but no one is required to stay for the entirety.

Help Center Volunteer Job Description

Background: Community problems are significant in Montana, resulting in crisis for an increasing number of citizens. The Help Center receives over 16,000 calls a year, far beyond the capacity the staff can effectively handle. Volunteer involvement is critical to the success of the Crisis Line program.

Purpose: To make crisis intervention and community referrals available 24 hours a day to all individuals without regard to income, gender, religion, sexual orientation or race. The Help Center connects callers in personal crisis with an anonymous person who remains objective and attempts to empower individuals by providing access to community resources.

Outcomes: The goal of the Crisis Intervention and Referral Specialist is to use active listening skills to bring about a positive change in the emotional state of the caller from the time initial contact is made to the time the call is concluded. Callers seeking information or referral will experience increased awareness of the resources that are available in the community as a result of calling the Help Center hotline.

Training: Volunteer training is conducted up to 3 times per year by the Help Center Staff. Topics covered include Active Listening Skills, Abuse, Diversity & Sensitivity, Addictions, Suicide Intervention, Depression and Sexual Assault. Training also covers how to find referral information as well as answer calls after hours for other agencies and professionals.

Benefits:

- Shifts may be chosen to fit your personal schedule
- Helping a person in crisis can be an extremely rewarding experience
- The work offers valuable experience to the volunteer

Required skills and knowledge

Our volunteer training involves a time commitment of approximately 2-3 months at 4 hours a week. It is quite an investment of your and our time and energy. We train volunteers in the skills necessary to do telephone crisis counseling. Because there is so much to learn, it is important that a prospective volunteer already have the following skills/criteria in order to be able to fulfill the job demands.

- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older
- Not a current client of any of Help Center, Inc's programs.
- Not a recent client (past 3 years) of the crisis counseling programs (hotline, walk in, Intern counseling)
- Linguistically proficient
- Proficiency and ease with Internet search engines and online forms
- Skilled listener and communicator (written and oral)
- Some ability to multi-task (talk on phone while using searchable database)
- Committed to ongoing learning and personal growth
- Ability to be non-judgmental and handle tense moments
- Excellent customer service skills is a plus!

Responsibilities:

- Must complete all required 52 hours of the Help Center Training program
- Serve approximately 1 four-hour shift per week at the Help Center
- Notify Staff when a shift will be missed.
- Type up call details in online database form.
- Help with Telecare program calls as appropriate.
- Search database or internet for appropriate referrals as needed
- Assist in updating Resource Database (optional).
- Commit to the program for nine months
- Adhere to confidentiality policy