



## **Becoming a Crisis Support Volunteer Prospective Volunteer Information Package**

### **Contents**

- What's new? Update from the Program Coordinator
- The Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton & Area)
- Why Become a Volunteer Crisis Support Worker
- Expectations of a Volunteer Crisis Support Worker
- Requirements for Being a Volunteer Crisis Support Worker
- If You Are a Survivor of Violence
- Diversity
- Process to Becoming a Volunteer Crisis Support Worker
- In Closing
- Prospective Volunteer Application Form

### ***Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton and Area)***

75 MacNab St. South, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Hamilton, Ontario L8P 3C1

Web Site: <http://www.sacha.ca>

Business: 905-525-4573

24 Hour Support Line: 905-525-4162

Fax: 905-525-7085



July 2016

Dear Prospective Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Crisis Support Program of SACHA, the Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton & Area).

The next training program will begin Saturday, September 10 2016 with a day-long session, from 10:00am to 5:00pm, and will continue every Wednesday evening, 6:00-9:00pm, from September 14 to December 14 2016. Screening interviews will be conducted in August.

This information package will give you more details about becoming a volunteer on our 24-Hour Support Line. Please consider it carefully before making your decision and do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

New: as well as woman-identified persons, non-binary persons, including persons who identify as genderqueer and/or gender non-conforming, may apply.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon!

Miriam Sager  
Crisis Support Program Coordinator

(905) 525-4573 ext. 222  
Email: [clvol@sacha.ca](mailto:clvol@sacha.ca)

A Member of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres  
Funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General  
A United Way Member Agency



## **The Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton & Area)**

### VISION

SACHA envisions a world free of violence and oppression.

### MISSION

SACHA is a feminist, non-profit, community-based organization of women guided by anti-racist and anti-oppressive values. Understanding the dynamics of gender and power in sexual violence, our programs will:

- Provide services to people who have experienced sexual violence at any point in their lives.
- Work to end violence and oppression through education, advocacy, coalition-building, community partnerships and activism.
- Work towards the equitable inclusion of all women.

SACHA will challenge social and political structures and systems that contribute to the experience of violence, oppression, and exploitation of all people.





## **Why Become a Volunteer 24-Hour Support Line Worker?**

It is no secret that being a volunteer crisis support worker requires a lot of time and dedication. People do this work for many reasons. Even though the demands are high, they volunteer because they know that the work is important. They feel satisfaction knowing they are making a difference. Many volunteers are committed to changing society in order to end violence against women.

- You will help survivors of sexual violence and their support persons;
- You will learn new skills or improve the ones you already have;
- You will learn about the community;
- You will meet other talented people and maybe make some close friendships;
- You will gain valuable experience for school and work.

Please note that although SACHA greatly appreciates its volunteers, it is a very small organization and therefore the chances for employment with SACHA are slim.

You must figure out why *you* want to volunteer with SACHA. What are your goals? Is the Crisis Support Program the best way to achieve them?

## **Expectations of a Volunteer Crisis Support Worker**

1. One-year commitment to being a volunteer in the program.
2. We ask that you work 2 4-hour shifts, or eight hours, per week on the Support Line. You sign up for your shifts according to your availability.
3. Workers will attend monthly meetings to share information, to get support and to participate in on-going training. Meetings are usually held at 6:00-8:00 pm.
4. Workers take calls from their homes. Our answering service receives the calls and asks the caller if they wish to leave their name and phone number. If callers are comfortable with that, the answering service will phone the volunteer at home and pass along the information. If a caller wishes to remain anonymous, the answering service will “patch” the two parties together.
5. When phoning a caller, workers will use call blocking to maintain confidentiality of their phone numbers. Each worker is responsible for ensuring call block is available on her phone.
6. Workers will provide emotional support, information and advocacy to adult survivors of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, child sexual abuse, incest and sexual harassment. We provide phone support to survivors of all gender identities, sixteen years of age and older, and to the support persons of survivors.

7. If needed, workers will access an interpreter on the Line to assist the communication between the worker and the caller.
8. At times, you and a sister worker will accompany survivors to hospital - the Juravinski or the General, and/or to the police station. Special circumstances that may prevent you from going on accompaniments must be discussed with the Coordinator in advance; if approved, you are expected to arrange for two other workers to go in your place. Volunteers who do not have a vehicle can use the taxi service that SACHA works with.
9. You may be asked by the coordinator or by sister workers to cover extra shifts or to go on an accompaniment. You will decide, at that time, if you are able to do either of those things. It is not required that you be available at all times.
10. You will consult with other volunteers and staff about any difficult situations that you are unsure how to deal with or when you need immediate support. Your main staff contact on staff is the Crisis Support Program Coordinator but if she is unavailable, other staff will assist you.
11. You will report to the Program Coordinator on the next business day when you have gone on an accompaniment or dealt with a serious incident (for example, a suicidal caller or a report to a children's aid society). In some circumstances you will be expected to call immediately after the call for support.
12. You will maintain statistics on appropriate forms and keep them safely confidential until they are handed to the Program Coordinator at the next monthly meeting.
13. If you are unable to cover a shift you have signed up for, it is your responsibility to find a sister worker to take the shift for you and to inform the Coordinator of the change.
14. You may participate in a volunteer committee, and may help in various other tasks related to the operation of the Program.

Even though you are taking calls by yourself from home, you are not alone. Other volunteers and staff are available for your support. If you have concerns regarding the work, the Program Coordinator is available to meet with you. You will be asked to provide feedback on the program.

During training, prospective crisis support volunteers will be given a volunteer manual that provides more information about policies and procedures.





## **Requirements for Being a Crisis Support Volunteer**

Volunteer crisis support workers will:

1. Be woman-identified, or a non-binary person (including persons who identify as genderqueer and/or gender non-conforming).
2. Be 18 years of age or older.
3. Be willing to get a current police check before completing training.
4. Have private access to a phone and the Internet.
5. Act within the spirit of SACHA's Vision/Mission Statements.
6. Adhere to SACHA's Policies and Procedures, including the Code of Ethics.
7. Maintain confidentiality as outlined in SACHA's Policies.
8. Demonstrate a commitment to women's and children's right to safety.
9. Demonstrate a commitment to a woman's right to make her own choices and to be respected for who she is.
10. Adhere to SACHA's pro-choice position. This means that if a caller is pregnant and wants to discuss available options, you will offer the options of keeping the baby, giving it up for adoption, or abortion.
11. Commit to the time requirements. Any leave of absence will be negotiated with the Program Coordinator. (For example, students who are not available during the summer can discuss this with the Coordinator. In order to ensure the Line is staffed at all times, a limited number of such students will be accepted.)
12. Demonstrate effective communication skills, ability to provide emotional support and information, and a good working knowledge of the English language.
13. Demonstrate a willingness to learn how to advocate for survivors of sexual violence.
14. Attend 13 of the 16 training sessions and attend catch up sessions with the facilitators on any missed sessions.
15. Although prospective volunteers will complete an initial screening interview, training is an ongoing screening process. The training team will address concerns as they come up.

### **Training will include:**

- gender-based, feminist analysis of sexual violence
- anti-racism/anti-oppression education
- crisis support skills development
- dynamics and emotional impacts of adult & child sexual assault
- medical and legal processes
- working with suicidal callers
- reporting to a child welfare agency
- roles and responsibilities of a volunteer crisis support worker
- policies and procedures
- role playing in small groups

### **If You Are a Survivor of Violence**

For workers who are survivors, working on the 24-Hour Support Line can bring old memories forward and stir up many feelings. We ask, therefore, that survivors be at a place in their healing journey where they understand the impact the violence has had on them, and can cope with these memories and feelings.

Former SACHA service users may apply to volunteer after a twelve-month waiting period.

### **Diversity**

As part of SACHA's work against racism and other oppressions, we strive to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Woman-identified/non-binary persons including persons who identify as genderqueer and/or gender non-conforming, who are Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, lesbian, bi-sexual, 2-spirited, queer, racialized, with disAbilities, and/or who experience any other oppressions are encouraged to apply.

Our screening and selection process considers equity as a factor.

### **Process To Becoming a Crisis Support Volunteer**

1. Read this information package carefully. If you require more information, call the Crisis Support Program Coordinator.
2. Call the Crisis Support Program Coordinator to schedule a screening interview. Currently, interviews take place in August (for the fall session) and in January-February (for the spring session).
3. Bring your completed Prospective Volunteer Application Form (see below) to your screening interview. If you cannot print the form, we will provide you with one when you arrive for your interview.
4. The screening interview will last approximately 45 minutes. You will be interviewed by the Program Coordinator and one other staff or a volunteer. If both you and the interviewers



agree that you are a good candidate for 24-Hour Support Line work, you will be included in the candidate list. In order to meet our equity goals, priority will be given to candidates of equal scoring who come from marginalized communities. Answers will be given by email one week before training begins.

5. Although prospective volunteers will complete an initial screening interview, training is an on-going screening process and the training team will address concerns as they come up.
6. You will be asked to show us a current police check before the end of training, as well as completing other needed paper-work.
7. In addition to the training provided by SACHA, you will be required to complete short online tutorials in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
8. You will be given a test call between the two last sessions of training. The test or simulated call is a role play on the phone with you as the Crisis Support Worker. You will be evaluated and informed if:
  - a) you are ready to take calls; or
  - b) you need another test call; or
  - c) your skills are not suited to crisis support work on SACHA's 24-Hour Support Line.
9. Once you have met all requirements and pass the test call, you will be a Crisis Support Program volunteer!

♀ **In Closing**

You have reached the end of the information booklet. Hopefully, it has given you the information you need to make your decision. If you are applying for the program, please complete the Application Form and bring it with you to your screening interview. If you have questions, please contact the Crisis Support Program Coordinator at 905-525-4573 ext. 222 or at [clvol@sacha.ca](mailto:clvol@sacha.ca).

If you decide that this is not the volunteer position for you and if you are comfortable in sharing your reasons with us, please let us know. The information is helpful for us when we are making changes to our program and developing new ideas. We may also be able to offer you other, more suitable volunteer opportunities with SACHA. We look forward to hearing from you!



**STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**  
Crisis Support Program  
**Prospective Volunteer Application Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

In order to participate in training and be considered to become a SACHA Crisis Support Volunteer you must meet the following requirements:

1. Be 18 years of age or older
2. Woman-identified/non-binary person including persons who identify as genderqueer and/or gender non-conforming
3. Commit to staffing the Support Line for eight hours per week (broken up into two 4-hour shifts) for a year after training
4. Have private access to a phone and the Internet
5. Be able to provide a vulnerable sector police screening (you will receive a letter to the police when in training so you can be reimbursed by SACHA; please do not go yet.)

I have read and understood the above mentioned requirements.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please turn over



p. 2

Please provide the names and phone numbers of two references, at least one of whom is not a friend. Family members are not accepted as references. These should be people who have known you for at least 2 years (unless you are new to Canada) and who are able to provide information regarding your skills, abilities and suitability to work with survivors of sexual violence.

**Reference 1**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Alt. Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

**Reference 2**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Alt. Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize SACHA, Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton & Area), to contact the above-named referees in connection with my application for the crisis support volunteer position. I authorize these referees to provide a reference in connection with my application for this position.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date