

## HELP CENTER, INC. JOB DESCRIPTION

**PROGRAM:** Help Center

**UP-DATED/REVISED:** January 2019

**TITLE:** Crisis Counselor/I&R Specialist/Office – **known in house as “CC”**

**BENEFITS:** At ½ time or more: Prorated sick leave from date of hire.  
After 30 days: Pro-rated health benefits according to policies.  
After successful 6 months' probation: Vacation time, prorated and retroactive to date of hire.

**SALARY SCALE:** Starts at \$27,500-\$28,875. DOE. Prorated for part time, raise after successful probation.

### **REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- \* Some education and/or experience in a social work/counseling related field
- \* Good communication skills: speaking, writing, and listening.
- \* Skill in listening and working non-judgmentally with clients from a wide range of backgrounds
- \* Ability & willingness to develop competency in making assessments, developing crisis management and safety plans, offering information and referral to crisis callers and to other agencies/professionals.
- \* Ability & willingness to work independently, exercising professional judgment, taking responsibility for the total Help Center program and policies, occasionally handling several crises simultaneously.
- \* Computer literacy/familiarity/ skill with most common programs (word processing, spreadsheet, database)
- \* Literacy/skill with the Internet and E-mail, including ability to utilize features of search engines.
- \* Participation in Help Center Crisis/ASIST Suicide training either prior to, or a.s.a.p. after accepting position.
- \* Ability/Willingness to participate in recruiting, training, supervision and ongoing support of volunteers.

### **OVERVIEW of CRISIS COUNSELING/ I&R POSITION**

Crisis Counselors (CCs) are the primary staff for the Help Center **and** are responsible for the functioning of all programs and services when on duty. When no volunteers are working, CCs answer all phone lines, make Telecare calls, and work with walk-in clients. When volunteers are on shift the CCs on duty support, supervise, train and provide back-up. During slack time and/or when a shift is covered by an experienced volunteer, all CCs are expected to work on “other jobs” which are separately described and assigned. “Other jobs” cover the gamut from household, office, and administrative upkeep to fundraising, data gathering/updating/processing, grant writing, volunteer recruitment/coordination, group facilitation, and community education. Specific tasks will be assigned/agreed upon after new staff get “feet on the ground”. Every CC is strongly encouraged to attend Help Center Staff Meetings, and to participate actively when we plan duty schedules, set/revise policies, make decisions about events, and engage in mutual supervision regarding our work with clients and volunteers. To enable staff to do this on “paid time”, job assignments include “Flex Time”, which is paid time outside of assigned shifts.

All Crisis Counselors are encouraged to engage in continuous professional development. Literature, Internet, workshops, and interaction with other professionals may all be used on and off the job to develop various counseling and I & R competencies. Every CC will have chances to participate at volunteer training sessions. CC's are responsible for helping to update/improve the training materials for volunteers and staff.

CCs may also be called upon to participate in HC outreaches, particularly suicide outreaches, and/or to take over difficult calls when volunteers request or need help. We are all encouraged to call on and support each other when situations arise that are difficult or impossible for the person on shift to handle alone. We all strive to be available to each other for assistance/consultation/debriefing. Currently the center is accredited as a crisis/suicide program by the Contact U.S.A and the National Suicide Prevention Life Line, and as a 211 line with the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS). All of us function as Suicide and I&R Specialists, and individual certification in I&R and suicide intervention is strongly encouraged.

A counseling license is not required for this position. However, CCs (and volunteers) who are accumulating hours toward licensure may make arrangements to receive supervision from licensed counselors on staff for scheduled counseling sessions with clients at the Help Center.

## **SCHEDULING of DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Help Center 24 -7 program is **staffed in 6 or 12 hour day shifts** (8am-8pm) and **12 hour night shifts** (8pm-8am). We do not close for weekends or holidays and the time-off-with-pay which is granted for certain holidays by the agency is accounted for in CC jobs by subtracting the hours from the yearly work load. CCs work a combination of day and night shifts. Staff must be on HC premises for the **entire 12 hour shift to assure that at least one staff person is always available**. At night and on weekend days, someone is assigned as backup for the staff counselor.

**All CC positions are salaried and paid by the job done, not by the hour.** Full time CCs are scheduled roughly 169 hours per month. This usually includes 12 shifts in a mix days and nights, some backup duty and some flex time. For CCs working less than full time assignments are prorated. Vacation and Sick leave are earned by those working half time or more.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES: PRIMARY DUTIES ON “SHIFT DAYS” for “Staff of the Day”:**

1. Handle all incoming contacts or supervise a volunteer in doing so.
2. Make sure all client contacts are correctly recorded in iCarol, edit when needed.
3. Must be familiar with all incoming calls on a weekly basis and work with volunteers on specific issues as needed.
4. Check that all Telecare clients or someone close to them are reached each day.
5. Supervise adherence to HC policies and rules, including special concerns or rules for particular clients.
6. Schedule, check with, supervise and support volunteers on duty (incl. Telecare and resource volunteers).
7. Must be constantly available to crisis volunteers for back up, consultation, out-reach, client appointments, overload.
8. Provide or supervise after-hours answering services for other agencies and counselors, as arranged.
9. Supervise volunteers in recording time and filling out session notes. Correct drop downs, add notes as needed.
10. Become familiar/help update referral & emergency info, newsletters, announcements etc.
11. Keep a balance between being always available and helpful to callers and not offering a chat line at night.
12. Unless volunteers have been accredited for suicide, staff-on-duty picks up the “Suicide Line”.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES: SECONDARY DUTIES**

1. Participate in HC meetings, in-service training opportunities.
2. Share in preparing training materials; participate in recruitment and training of volunteers.
3. Take on specific assignments from the “other jobs” list.
4. Meet clients at HC for scheduled appointments, or cover phones for others who are seeing clients.
5. Serve as a member of HC Outreach Team for suicide or other severe crises.
6. Check incoming e-mail, respond/re-direct as needed. Check “shift board”, inform other staff of messages, red tags, etc.
7. Give back-up and support to staff or volunteers on shift, pick up second line as needed.
8. Develop familiarity with LA Taxonomy coding practices and assignments.
9. Confirm and verify data through internet searches, email and phone calls.
10. Enter current data into Database (after specific instructions).
11. Assist other staff and volunteers in database entry, searches and resolution of technological concerns.
13. Put outgoing mail in mailbox in the morning. Check for incoming mail during the day.
14. Participate in all Help Center fundraising activities

**POSITION REPORTS TO:** Help Center Director, 2-1-1 Coordinator, or Clinical Supervisor

**HIRING SIGN-IN INFORMATION**

\_\_\_\_\_ was hired on \_\_\_\_\_ to work \_\_\_\_\_ time under this job description

The job consists \_\_\_\_\_ time crisis counseling/I&R, a mix of \_\_\_\_\_ day and night shifts per month, with backup shifts and other duties to be added as arranged.

Starting salary \_\_\_\_\_/year, or \_\_\_\_\_/pay period (alternate Wednesdays)

Signatures signify that program and agency policies and procedures were made available/discussed with the new employee.

Copies of the job description signed by the hiring supervisor and the employee will serve as the letter of employment to the employee and the personnel file. This JD will be a basis for end of probation evaluation. Probation can be extended if all duties stated here are not yet mastered

Background check was performed on \_\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_

**READ and SIGNED by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Date

**DISCUSSED by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Hiring staff person Date

End of probation to be evaluated after \_\_\_\_\_