

Crisis Line Testimonials

"When I started volunteering at the FHCL two years ago I was not aware that the experience would change me as an aspiring social worker and also as a person. Over the last two years I have received ongoing training from mentors and staff that taught me to listen above all else. The callers demonstrate resilience and have taught me that everyone has a story to tell and sharing it with a stranger is very courageous."

"Before volunteering with the crisis line I lacked the communication skills that you can only truly gain through practice. I now feel more confident taking on challenging situations and taking on a role as a listener which is so important in my future as a social worker. This opportunity has opened doors not available to me before my experience volunteering at the crisis line. It is honestly a wonderful community to be a part of."

~ Jiven

"Volunteering at the crisis line has been transformative for me. In just one short year, my skills on the phone, talking to strangers, and demonstrating that I understand the caller have improved dramatically. I've had the opportunity to talk people through some of the toughest times in their lives and provide a listening ear when it is most needed. Each story shared with me is something I am privileged to learn. Volunteering for the crisis line is one of the most fulfilling experiences I have ever had because you know that on every shift, you are making a difference. This has become even more meaningful as a mentor - I get to share what I have learned with trainees, and have an impact both within and beyond the crisis line."

~ Kimberley

"Volunteering at the Fraser Health Crisis Line has been an amazing and incredibly rewarding experience. During each shift I learn something new - whether it be from other volunteers, the staff, or the callers. And I have come to truly appreciate the audacity and determination of the individuals I've met in person or through the phone. This experience has taught me skills in communication applicable to all facets of my life, personal and professional. When friends are feeling distraught and need someone to talk to, I no longer feel uneasy and uncertain of what to say. Additionally, as I begin medical school, I notice that skills I've learned and practiced in the phone room are appearing in the curriculum time and time again. Thus I am able to feel more confident in myself and my abilities as I further my education. Volunteering as a call taker is an opportunity I highly recommend to everyone - you will walk away from each shift more aware of yourself and the world around you."

~ Carol

"I recently obtained a job in the field of Mental Health & Addictions. After my first few weeks on the job, I realized that it was my Crisis Line training that provided me the most transferable skills. Despite reaching the halfway point in my BA program and having other related work experience, what I learned at the Crisis Line proved to be most useful. Being able to utilize skills involving empathy, active listening, identifying coping strategies and strength based approaches has become second hand to me. These quickly became the tools that are what help me, help others! Anytime someone I know shows interest in getting their foot in the door of their field, I never hesitate to recommend the Fraser Health Crisis Line! "

~ Nick

"In the summer of 2011, as an undergraduate Psychology student, I started volunteering at the FHCL with mixed feelings of excitement and tentativeness. Little did I know that I had made the best decision in preparing myself for graduate studies in Counselling Psychology. Speaking with individuals in distress was truly an honor, through which I gained knowledge of individuals' deep suffering and incredible strengths, and inevitably, I became more empathic and compassionate. My volunteering experience led to a short-term employment at the FHCL as a support worker.

Crisis Line not only helped me gain admission into graduate school, it also prepared me well for it. The superb training and ongoing supervision helped me develop a solid foundation of helping skills that are essential for counsellors in training. As a result, my transition into graduate school was very smooth. The invaluable experience helped me secure a pre-practicum position during graduate studies that gave me extra training. Talking with suicidal individuals also gave me research ideas that enabled me to collaborate on a search project with one of my professors. In sum, FHCL gave me more than I could have imagined and it will likely continue to help me both academically and professionally."

~ Vivian

"As a volunteer at the Crisis line for over a decade I found it extremely satisfying and a sense of achievement with every positive call but surprisingly found how instrumental the training and practice has been in dealing effectively with the public in the daily operation of my business. I recently mentioned to a colleague that I truly feel my business would not have been nearly as successful as it is today had I not had the crisis line training and practice."

~ Aresh

"Volunteering as a call-taker with the Fraser Health Crisis Line has changed my perspective in so many ways. I learned so much about empathy and connecting with people even if it just over the phone. I truly felt that I was making a difference and while the callers would say that we help them, I would say that they help us! Speaking with people who are going through tough circumstances really caused me to put my life into perspective and it has also fuelled my desire to pursue social work. It truly is one of the best volunteer experiences you can have because the training is so valuable no matter what field you are entering into. Not to mention that the staff/support team is phenomenal. They provide a positive and encouraging work environment

and I felt so much support from them which made the work even more enjoyable and worthwhile. My work at the FHCL really showed me that really great things can come out of dark times in people's lives, and that sometimes all people need is something as simple as another person's voice to get them through. I would definitely recommend this amazing opportunity for anyone looking to gain valuable experience and truly make a difference. I am so grateful to have been a part of something so wonderful."

~ Katrina

"For years I saw the ad in the local paper offering training to become a crisis line volunteer. It appealed to me as my kids were growing up and I now wanted to volunteer outside of the school system. I finally took a chance and registered for training, feeling nervous and unsure of whether I could learn the skills needed to fulfill this demanding volunteer role. Little did I know this opportunity would change my life course! The training I received was exceptional and supportive, providing a comfortable transition into taking phone calls. It was rewarding to connect with callers and to feel I had provided a safe place for callers to feel heard and validated. After a year, the Surrey crisis line became the Fraser Health crisis line, and I was hired with this expansion. Three years as a Crisis line support worker taught me valuable skills such as empathy, reflective listening and decision-making in emergency situations. It also provided me with an opportunity to train new volunteers and mentor current volunteers. My life was enriched by both the callers and the volunteers. It also led me to take another chance. Grad school. Although I was motivated to become a counsellor, I was concerned about taking on the challenge of going back to school. However, my crisis line training opened up the door to grad school, just as it is also now helping me succeed as a student."

Many students apply to become crisis line volunteers to help gain entrance to grad school and other professional schools. In my case, I planned on staying a volunteer at the crisis line, and instead it opened doors and lead to new possibilities for me that I hadn't even considered. Either way, volunteering at the crisis line is a personally enriching opportunity. I am grateful to have been part of this community of helpers."

~ Debi

"Volunteering with the Fraser Health Crisis Line at Options Community Services has taught me valuable life skills, as well as skills relevant to my future academic and career goals. I have been able to secure paid employment within the agency due to my experience as a call-taker at the FHCL. Most importantly, my experience has increased my ability to communicate with and support clients in my paid employment, as well as other volunteer positions. I am grateful for all I have learned through my position volunteering and mentoring, and have no doubt that the experience I have gained will help me in various aspects of my life moving forward."

~ Erin

"After graduating from high school, I knew I wanted a career where I would be able to give back to my community but wasn't sure exactly where to start. With the guidance of my parents I learned about Fraser Health Crisis Line.

When I first began the training, I wasn't sure what to expect but with the guidance and advice from all the volunteers and mentors, I was given the skills that are needed to provide the support to all the callers at FHCL. People often asked me why I volunteered for FHCL, but when you have callers who share how thankful they are they had someone to talk to, and they wouldn't be alive if it weren't for FHCL it all makes sense. I felt I had accomplished something and that put a smile on my face.

Now four years later I am in the final stages of the RCMP Application process. I would not have the confidence or life experience to do this job if it wasn't for volunteering with FHCL and I know that the skills I learned will stay with me forever and assist me in my future career."

~ Emma

"I decided to volunteer with the Fraser Health Crisis Line because I wanted to improve my skills at communicating with vulnerable individuals and assessing risk during critical incidents, all while being able to do so in a calm and professional manner. The training I received was outstanding and the high level of responsibility that volunteers are entrusted with in this position allowed me to develop many marketable skills that I know will serve me well in my future career.

Perhaps most importantly, my experience speaking with callers going through some of the most difficult times in their lives allowed me to really put my own life and my own goals into perspective. At the end of every shift, I was constantly reminded of why I wanted to pursue medicine, and of the type of doctor I want to be in order to best serve the needs of my future patients.

I know that my experience as a volunteer, and later mentor, at the FHCL played a huge role in being accepted into medical school, not only by having the experience on my resume, but also by helping me develop the communication skills to respond effectively to even the most challenging interview questions during the admissions process."

~ Marc

"I chose to begin as a volunteer with Fraser Health because I wanted to increase my aptitude with handling uncomfortable situations. I, like most people, had the tendency to run away from difficult situations, and I knew that the only way to get rid of this bad habit was to expose myself to that which I found terrifying, i.e.: working with people going through a difficult time. By constantly exposing myself to difficult callers, I managed to turn my weakness of not knowing how to handle challenging situations into a strength.

The lessons and experiences I've gained as a crisis line volunteer have prepared me for the real world in ways words cannot bring to justice. Creating a bond with each caller and developing the ability to guide a person from a moment of darkness into one of light is a rare, yet precious gift to

have, and I am blessed to have gained it during my time as a mentor and a call taker with the Crisis Line.

My time with Fraser Health has given me a career as a 911 dispatcher, and I plan to take the call taking and leadership skills I've gained as a volunteer with me to this new career opportunity."

~ Gagan

"Being a call taker at the Fraser Health Crisis Line (FHCL) was a remarkable, rewarding and eye-opening experience. I chose to volunteer for Fraser Health because I had heard that it offered superb training for its prospective call takers. This turned out to be 100% true as staff and volunteers really provided training worth a million bucks – and it didn't cost us trainees a single dime.

Since day one, I have found my fellow call takers to be some of the most unique, bright and caring people I've ever met – anywhere. The countless skills I've developed at the crisis line and the situations I have encountered have better prepared me both as a person and as a future physician.

I wholeheartedly recommend the FHCL as an incredible opportunity to do something different and to make a difference with every shift."

~ Peter

"I started volunteering at the Fraser Health Crisis Line two years ago. I became a volunteer because I wanted the experience of working with people that needed someone to listen. The most valuable aspect of being a volunteer was the humbling experience. Talking to callers brings you back and you realize that you can make it through the obstacles that you're facing as well. There are also many career opportunities through the Crisis Line. I have since entered into a job opportunity that applies to my field of study. This opportunity to not only help others but grow within my own life, has been the most valuable experience for myself."

~ Nazia

"As a Psychology student, I have long had the aspiration of becoming a clinical counsellor. I have been volunteering in related fields to gain experience, knowledge, as well as to test out whether I would be the right fit for the helping profession. I learned about the Fraser Health Crisis Line through several of my psychology classmates. When I started volunteering at the Crisis Line one and a half years ago, I knew this was the experience that I had been looking for. Crisis Line has given me the basic counselling skills, crisis intervention skills and general communication skills that could not be obtained from my undergraduate courses. It is through Crisis Line that I discovered myself to have genuine interest and passion for helping. Here, I was provided with endless opportunities for further development, and I was able to become first a call taker, than a mentor,

and now a temporary support worker. Not to mention that being here means to be surrounded by friendly volunteers and supportive staff who are always available to help. I could not ask for more - thank you Crisis Line!"

~ Vivian

"I chose to volunteer at the FHCL because it felt like the perfect way for me to not only gain the experience needed for graduate school, but also give back to the community. The volunteer commitment was doable and flexible, allowing me to achieve balance in my life. The most valuable aspect of my volunteer and work time here is that it's taught me how to truly listen - it sounds so simple but a lot of people hear others but don't really listen to what is being said. This place and the skills I've gained here has taught me how to communicate better and it's led to an increase in my confidence as well."

~ SP

"Unknowingly, I began my career with Options at the Crisis Line - I was in an employment counselling program at SFU at the time."

Crisis Line training really helped me to broaden my range of communication skills. Prior to that, I tended to respond in ways that were most comfortable for me but not necessarily helpful for my clients. I continue to refine these communication techniques and use them to enhance my own personal relationships."

The training and experience is well recognized and respected, and has been a strong addition to my resume. I was a contract employee for half a dozen different agencies before working at Options and without exception, employers noted Crisis Line experience on my resume."

People will often hear me say "everyone should volunteer" and I proudly share my experience at the crisis line as a great place to learn very valuable life skills while contributing to my community."

~ Nick

"I chose to volunteer on the crisis line almost 20 years ago because I was considering a career in clinical psychology. My crisis line experiences solidified that goal and it was an important part of my successful application to graduate school. The excellent training I received also provided the beginning foundation of the skills I needed to work clinically with individuals of diverse backgrounds and mental health issues in my graduate program. Working on the Crisis Line was a valuable experience for me, and I have encouraged many others to volunteer as a way to contribute to their community, and also to learn if a career in a helping profession is the right one for them."

~ Rebecca /Associate Professor

"When I immigrated to Canada with backgrounds in farming and business administration I faced obstacles and opportunities alike. During that initial time I gained tough, yet valuable life experiences. These, coupled with the desire to become a fully contributing member of my chosen country's society, led me to ponder a career change. Since caring professions were of interest to me I began researching possible options. In this context I signed up for the Crisis Line Volunteer Center. The Crisis Line training workshop was fascinating from two perspectives; I felt excited about the prospect of helping people in need, and also saw potential to improve who I was as a person. Jackie did a fabulous job of teaching the material in an engaging, fresh and interesting manner. I happily committed to a mandatory year of phone room service, which proved to be a mainly rewarding, yet sometimes challenging experience. Something I consider particularly rewarding was the ability to move a caller from the brink of suicide to a more relaxed mindset allowing them to explore other options.

My Crisis Line experience had been considered an asset. As it turned out, this was the perfect line of work for me! I could put my administrative skills to good use while supporting counsellors serving their clients while gaining some insight into psychology at the same time. Not only did I eventually get permanently hired, I was able to vary and extend job responsibilities over the years.

To this day I benefit from my Crisis Line experience when I deal with some of the more challenging phone calls I occasionally receive. Having said that, improved listening skills are beneficial in all areas of life. For that reason alone, I would highly recommend volunteering for the Crisis Line."

~ Claudia

"When I started volunteering with the Crisis Line 3 years ago, I didn't know it would become such a big part of my life and have such an impact on my career in HR. While I attended BCIT for 2 years, I experienced more stress than I had up to that point. It would have been difficult to cope had I not continued volunteering; everyone is so supportive and I could always rely on someone to listen. After graduating, I was ready to start my career in HR. It was meant to be - Options Community Services was hiring! The transition from volunteer to employee was seamless since I was already familiar with the organization, their scope and their goals. Now, I have found a happy balance between working and volunteering for an organization that is very near and dear to my heart. Lucky me!"

~ Anca

"I began volunteering at the Fraser Health Crisis Line more than 10 years ago. I wanted to find new ways to give back to my community after my children had grown and I was no longer involved in the youth organizations my children had participated in.

Calls can range from loneliness/isolation to suicides and I hope I have made each person's day a little more bearable and I helped them get through the moment. At the end of each shift I reflect back on how lucky I am as we are all only separated by a little luck, a few poor choices and the supportive hands of one another.

I have also benefited by improving my own skills of active listening, empathy and problem solving which help in my day to day life. I am proud to be part of a team of volunteers that have chosen to help others discover their own abilities and make choices toward helping themselves make positive changes.

Volunteering helps complete me and makes me feel more fulfilled."

~ Bruce

"I realize now that there are lots of volunteering positions that would allow me to make a difference, and there are lots of positions that would have looked great on my resume, but the Crisis Line has provided me with the skills and experience to communicate effectively in any situation that I find myself thrown into. That to me is as valuable as any degree or certificate that I have ever earned."

~ Chris/Police Officer

"While I was completing my Bachelor's Degree, I knew I wanted to begin volunteer work in a highly rewarding yet challenging position. Throughout my research, the Fraser Health Crisis Line was the most impressive in terms of professionalism, opportunities, and especially appreciation of volunteers. We also have access to internal job postings because our skills and knowledge from the Crisis Line are so valued throughout the agency that "Crisis Line training is an asset" is even included on job postings.

Based on my positive experience with the Crisis Line, I knew that employment would reach the same standards and with that door being open for us, I began applying to internal job postings and it didn't take long before I was hired at Options Community Services. I have to say that the sense of appreciation, ongoing support of peers and staff, and endless opportunities are three main and invaluable aspects that this volunteer position has provided me with."

~ Tara

"I have really enjoyed my experience volunteering at the Fraser Heath Crisis Line for the last year. It has been a very valuable experience and has helped me decide what kind of career to pursue. Every time I volunteer there it helps me feel more appreciative and grateful for the life that I have. The training was very helpful and this is an excellent volunteer opportunity that I would highly recommend."

~ Sara

"Even though I now have my degree, I cannot say how much the Crisis Line experience has prepared me for so many positions in the work place. The skills I have learned, and training I have received at Options Community Services continues to be valuable to me over the years, in so many ways."

~ Brenda

"Volunteering with the Fraser Health Crisis Line gives me so much positive perspective into my own life and those around me that I sometimes feel selfish taking so much away from it."

~ Aresh

"The skills I learned at the Crisis Line have been invaluable during my social work program. Especially in the counselling courses, the skills you teach are mostly the same as the 3rd year courses! Volunteering and learning all the skills with the callers, and just learning through the agency have been instrumental in completing my program."

~ Trevor

"Our community would not be the same without the Crisis Line. We are the silent helpers that many people don't know about or see, but we give people that little boost they need to go on with their day. We help to empower people and believe in themselves when they lose their way."

~ Gozde

"I learned so much from working at the Crisis Line; it taught me the values of patience, understanding, compassion, and dealing with difficult and stressful situations. At the end of my shift, I always walked out of the Crisis Line feeling so grateful for my life."

~ Hala

"My experience at the Crisis Line has been a definite asset in my current field of study. Many of the theories used by the Crisis Line are right here in my textbooks. The Crisis Line has done a great job in preparing me for my professional career, and I just wanted to extend my appreciation."

~ Keisha

"I would like to commend the Crisis Line phone volunteers who played a very important role in saving the life of a suicidal female who was ready to jump from the Pattullo Bridge. Their quick thinking and ability to make sound decisions helped us to save the life of this female. I believe that the Crisis Line is the best program in Surrey, the leadership and training plays a very important role in each volunteer's life."

~ Jas / Police Officer

"The training I've received at the Crisis Line and the knowledge I've gained is not measurable. I truly feel that I've gained so much as a volunteer here and it definitely made my medical school application stand out. I will be a better physician from the Crisis Line experience."

~ Van

"I have found volunteering through the Crisis Line to be extremely rewarding. It not only educated me as to the issues that people in my community deal with on a daily basis but it also provided me with invaluable communication skills. I have found that I use these skills in all aspects of my life including professional and personal relationships. It has also improved the way I deal with stress in my own life. I have learned how to put things in perspective and to slow down and take a calmer approach to problems. This is especially true at work. I would recommend volunteering at the Crisis Line to anyone who not only wants to help people but to those who want to improve their own communication and life."

~ Christina

"I recently obtained a job in the field of Mental Health & Addictions. After my first few weeks on the job, I realized that it was my Crisis Line training that provided me the most transferable skills. Despite reaching the halfway point in my BA program and having other related work experience, what I learned at the Crisis Line proved to be most useful. Being able to utilize skills involving empathy, active listening, identifying coping strategies and strength-based approaches has become second hand to me. These quickly became the tools that are what help me, help others! Anytime someone I know shows interest in getting their foot in the door of their field, I never hesitate to recommend the Fraser Health Crisis Line!"

~ Nick

"I first discovered my passion for crisis line work years prior as a volunteer, and I decided to work at the Fraser Health Crisis Line because of the flexible, supportive work environment and the opportunity to advance my skills on the front lines and as a supervisor training volunteers. I found the call-taking to be exceptionally rewarding because the Crisis Line is structured to provide the ideal amount of support needed for you to really connect with, and support a caller through their moment of crisis; plus, there is nothing like the feeling after you say goodbye to a caller whose

day is better off for having spoken with you! My experience as a call-taker and support worker equipped me with a strong capacity to build rapport, engage in non-directive problem solving, assess suicide risk, assert boundaries, and provide feedback to others, all of which have helped me immensely as a mental health professional. I strongly believe that the Fraser Health Crisis Line provides an unparalleled amount of training and direct helping experience - I highly recommend the experience to anyone who is considering pursuing a career in a helping related discipline and who is empathetic, has strong communication skills, can remain calm under pressure, and is open to receiving feedback."

~ Ali

"I volunteered with the Fraser Health Crisis line for just over a year before ending my university studies. My time spent as a volunteer was an experience comparable to no other, which I feel beyond grateful for. I gained valuable crisis intervention skills as well as a new outlook on the complexity of living with various mental illnesses. This new understanding has given me a higher level of empathy as well as pushed me to continue in the field of mental health and continuously find ways to spread kindness in the community. This experience not only helped me find my career goals it also shaped me into the person I am today, every week I was reminded to never judge others and to stay open minded. This experience is one I would recommend to anyone who is interested, the staff and fellow volunteers make the environment feel comfortable and safe, while the callers remind you weekly the importance of the service and how healing the act of listening can be."

~ Simran