

# C.A. HELPLINE ORIENTATION INFORMATION

## TEXAS AREA SERVICE

We are glad you are here because it means you have chosen to be of service working the C.A. Helpline. It is one of the most important commitments a C.A. Member can make.

As Helpline volunteers, we represent Cocaine Anonymous. We are a direct link to the public, and are quite often the first impression that any person may have with our fellowship. Therefore, the sound of our voice, our attitude, our helpfulness and courtesy – or lack thereof – could have a profound or devastating effect on the caller. We cannot overemphasize that fact. Understanding and a sincere desire to help are our principles and guidelines, and we should, at all times be guided by the Twelve Traditions.

The C.A. Helpline can literally save the life of the person on the other end of the line.

As a phone volunteer, you are an indispensable part of the C.A. Program. At the same time, please bear in mind that **NO ONE CAN SPEAK FOR C.A.** We share only from our own experience and recovery.

**WE ARE NOT COUNSELORS, AND WE ARE NOT QUALIFIED TO ADVISE CALLERS TO TAKE ANY ACTION EXCEPT TO SUGGEST:**

1. Stop using
2. Attend C.A. Meeting

**REMEMBER, THE PHONE VOLUNTEER'S PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO HELP THE ADDICT WHO IS STILL SUFFERING. OUR MAJOR OBJECTIVE IS TO SIMPLY GET THE NEWCOMER TO C.A. MEETING. FOR THIS REASON, THE MEETING IS YOUR GREATEST TOOL.**

Phone volunteers need to review and understand the Do's and Don't s Guidelines on how to answer C.A.

Helplines. It is the only method we have to provide a standard of quality for the service we provide on the Helpline. **PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO ANSWER THE HELPLINE IF THEY HAVE NOT REVIEWED AND UNDERSTAND THESE GUIDELINES OF TH C.A. HELPLINE.**

**Sobriety requirements:**

- \* One year continuous sobriety
- \* At least a year commitments
- \* Have worked all 12 steps
- \* Become familiar with all physical C.A. meeting locations

**Texas Area Service Helpline Guidelines**

## Do's

- Be polite – you may be the only contact the caller may have with C.A.
- Find out the need of the caller.
- Share your experience, strength and hope.
- Encourage caller to attend meetings.
- Try to prevent putting the caller on “Hold”.
- When necessary, refer calls to appropriate committee chair.
- Keep all calls on point.
- Encourage caller to call 911 if there is an emergency.

## Don'ts

- Pick someone up at their home – agree to meet at a meeting or public facility. Phone volunteers are advised not to go to the home of caller, even if it's just to take caller to a meeting.
- Phone volunteers MUST NOT recommend any outside treatment (i.e., hospitals, doctors, treatment centers, etc.). Remember our Sixth Tradition: *“A C.A. Group ought never endorse, finance or lend the C.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”*
- We never give other member's names or phone numbers out over the phone...Remember anonymity.
- Don't try to persuade the caller to stop using drugs if they don't want to stop. Do not label them as an addict or state that they have a problem. Stick to what you hear, how it was for you, and what you did about it. People can learn a lot by listening to your story. Their defenses could come up if you try to tell them their story.
- Do not engage in prolonged drug-a-logs or comparison studies of drug use. Share in a general way; what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now.
- Don't feel you need to stay on the line with a caller who is in any way abusive or perverse, or who is quite simply too loaded to hear your part of the conversation.

## Finally

We don't like to turn away from those in pain, but sometimes calls can be shocking and traumatic. Recovery teaches us that to preserve our own sobriety, we must take care of ourselves first, and the Helpline context is no exception. Reach out to another volunteer or fellowship member if you are suffering from caller distress.

The Fifth Tradition states: *“Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers”*...However, the way to best help a caller varies with each situation. Try to communicate that there is help and that they are not alone. Feel free to let them know about your background so they are more comfortable speaking freely with you. Remember, you are not responsible for the results of the call – you're only responsible for passing on the message of recovery and hope.

**The purpose of the Helpline is to let people know C.A. exists and to help them get to a meeting.**