



## **A Brief History**

Lifeline is a not for profit agency offering free, professional and confidential counseling, support and information services.

Established in 1965 as a Charitable Trust by Dr. D.O. Williams, Lifeline was set up by eight churches who became founding members. These churches established the lifeline and Interchurch Counseling Service for the purpose of providing crisis counseling to the people of greater Auckland. While no longer involved in the operation of Lifeline Auckland these churches form an important part of Lifeline's history.

Lifeline Auckland has evolved over the years to meet the changing needs of the community and is funded in various ways including support from trusts and funding bodies, sponsorships and from individual donations.

Originally operating out of a single room in Greys Ave in Central Auckland, thanks to a gift from the Edith Winstone Trust, Lifeline was able to purchase a suite of rooms in Airedale Street. These premises were soon outgrown and the move was made to premises in Manukau Road in Epsom.

In 1987, the year of the stock market crash, Lifeline was at the point of insolvency when Presbyterian Support Northern offered a floor in a building they had purchased at 95 Gt. South Road, Remuera. This building once owned by Presbyterian Support was purchased by Lifeline and still houses our counseling services to this day.

In the beginning Lifeline was a face to face counseling service with the telephone facility being added shortly after. A Youthline telephone service was formed in the early years by the then director Fr. Felix Donnelly and was encouraged by Lifeline to become the independent service it is today

## **Services**

Over the years Lifeline has developed services to meet specific populations and needs. These include;

- Lifeline 24/7 – telephone counseling, 24 hour, 365 day a year service
- Face to Face Counseling – one hour appointments for an agreed donation
- Kidsline – a telephone counseling service for children up to the age of 14 and staffed by specially trained year 12 & 13 students known as “Buddies”
- Mensline – telephone counseling and support for men staffed by male only counselors
- Chinese Lifeline – support for the Chinese community in the form of telephone and Face to Face counseling in Mandarin and Cantonese languages
- Gambling Helpline – a telephone service responding to gambling addiction. A fully owned subsidiary of Lifeline

Lifeline also staffs counseling and crisis lines on behalf of various government departments, e.g. The National Depression Initiative, Like Minds Like Us, 211 Resource Directory, Family Violence Service and also runs suicide prevention workshops under the LivingWorks name.



## **Culture**

Lifeline attracts people who are prepared to work hard to learn the sophisticated skills of quality telephone and face to face counseling and who are prepared to make a firm commitment to the service. People who understand and respect Lifeline's philosophy of acceptance, compassion, honesty and caring.

## **Supervision**

Supervision is mandatory within Lifeline. All counselors and some staff are supervised on a regular basis. This is part of the commitment to quality and to being a professional service.

## **Training**

In 1998 Lifeline was accredited as a Private Training Establishment by the NZQA. This means we are able to offer nationally recognized unit standard based training for those wishing to undertake learning for the NZQA framework. For trainees not interested in obtaining formal recognition there is the alternative Community Stream process.

Both streams of training are a balance of self awareness, counseling skills and self care. Over a period of 12 weeks trainees commit to over 120 hours of training, including contact work, preparation, assignments, seminars, reading, journal work and listening shifts. Trainees take their first calls under supervision and attend a probationary supervision group for three months to ease them into the work of the agency

## **Commitment**

Volunteers are asked for a commitment of 2 years. Many stay much longer, some leave earlier, but a commitment of 2 years allows us to maintain a stable and consistent roster. The commitment is for 3 shifts of 3 hours each month, attendance at a monthly supervision group meeting and to attend three in service trainings per year.

Lifeline is by its very nature reliant on people. The quality of the service we provide has a direct relationship to our volunteers. Therefore we choose to spend time on nurturing, challenging and caring for the people involved in the agency. We strive for the best possible climate that enables volunteers to work effectively and to produce a level of work that meets the needs of the receivers of Lifeline services.

If you decide to join Lifeline you will be one of hundreds of volunteers who generously offer to work toward reducing the distress in our community. You are important not only for the work you undertake but also for the qualities and attributes you bring that contribute to the health of the agency

We hope you want to know more about Lifeline.

It would be our privilege to help you discover what that more is.