

The Samaritans' Free, Confidential 24 Hour Hotline/Listening Line – the gateway to care and a lifetime of support*

Suicide prevention may sound depressing, but it is really about hope- the hope that we can make a difference by being there for a caller who just needs someone to listen, someone to care. People of all ages and backgrounds face difficult problems in their lives. They often believe no one cares or wants to listen. They can sometimes feel hopeless, alone or have suicidal thoughts.

Since 1977, The Samaritans of Rhode Island has been the state's most trusted listening line. Our mission is to prevent suicide by providing emotional support through the internationally recognized model of befriending. We facilitate this mission by maintaining a free, anonymous and confidential state-wide 24-hour Crisis Hotline/ Listening Line.

This volunteer-based hotline is supported philanthropically and available to all callers without regard to prequalification or ability to pay. Trained Samaritan volunteers use caring nonjudgmental, listening skills to befriend callers of all ages and backgrounds,

What do we know about the suicidal?

They feel hopeless. They believe no one cares if they live or die. And they believe they are doing everyone a favor if they die by suicide.

What is considered the biggest risk factor for suicide?

The World Health Organization reports that internationally, the single biggest suicide risk factor is the lack of connectedness to family, friends, and community.

Do you have to be suicidal to call The Samaritans?

Callers do not have to be suicidal to call The Samaritans. Most callers are not. They talk about many different personal issues. Some call only once, while others may call often or even every day – perhaps just to let us know how their day went or to say goodnight to someone who cares. Samaritan volunteers are there to listen as often as needed.

For callers not receiving professional care and for those seeking information to help a family member or friend, The Samaritans can actively point them in the direction of emergency services and licensed care programs in Rhode Island.

The Samaritans does not replace professional medical, mental health, social service, or pastoral care. However, we can shore up supportive services between appointments or when family and friends are not available.

Hotline/Listening Line support is also available to callers when professional services are no longer an option. We believe those who have been marginalized by the stigma of suicide or the lack of available services should not be abandoned. Whether in crisis, recovering from a crisis, or caring for someone in crisis- for some callers we may be the only daily support available. There are Rhode Islanders for whom the alternative to The Samaritans would be no care at all.

Why We Need Your Volunteer Help Now!

With cutbacks in federal, state, and local programs, the continuation of The Samaritans' volunteer-based hotline program is imperative to ensure callers of all ages know someone cares and there are options to suicide.

Who Benefits from The Samaritans?

Anticipated health benefits for our callers:

- Access to free universal support, without regard to physical and mental health or ability to pay.
- Access to a lifetime of support with the option of becoming regularly supported callers.
- Crisis and regular support when professional and/or family care is not available.
- Nonjudgmental befriending that does not interfere with medical or mental health case-management plans.
- Respite to family members/care givers of the chronically emotionally or physically ill who are befriended.
- Caller and caregiver access to our list of Rhode Island licensed medical/mental health facility services, via telephone referrals and/or web site linkage.
- Anonymous monitoring of overall call referrals to professional medical/mental health services, to demonstrate and advocate the need for greater medical/ mental health services.

Anticipated benefits for our volunteers:

- Being part of a cadre of volunteer leaders in Rhode Island's public health suicide prevention network.
- Challenging, intensive but highly rewarding volunteer experience with opportunities to make a positive difference to others.
- Enhanced communication skills usable in all aspects of life.
- Opportunity to learn the art of befriending ("non-judgmental listening") by questioning gently, tactfully and without intruding; encouraging others to tell their own stories

in their own time and space; refraining from offering advice and instead offering confidential emotional support; and always trying to see others' points of view, regardless of personal religious or political beliefs.

- Gains in the kind of self-respect that can only be earned by giving.
- Opportunities to meet new, interesting people with a shared sense of purpose.

A proven method of suicide prevention:

In 2003, The Samaritans implemented a research-based Outcomes Logic Model. This model demonstrates our Rhode Island based program works! From our study we know that most of our Samaritan callers are daily supported callers; most of our callers are in professional care; and many of our callers have previously attempted suicide - a risk factor for future suicide. ***We also know that the more our volunteers keep our lines open- the more likely we are saving lives.***

(Note: This study is only relevant to the program practices of The Samaritans of RI.)

The Samaritans – the Community Service Opportunity of a Lifetime:

As the saying goes, once a Samaritan always a Samaritan. You do not need special qualifications, just a willingness to help! Our 21-hour training program prepares you to follow our proven program guidelines. Since our beginning in 1977, we have trained more than 1250 volunteers in the art of befriending.

The Samaritans depends on our volunteers- dedicated individuals, 18 years or older and out of high school, to staff our 24-hour* hotline/listening line.

Portuguese and Spanish speakers are also needed and welcomed.

Call us or visit our web site @ www.samaritansri.com to learn more about this rewarding experience. You may also contact The Samaritans through the Volunteer Center of RI @ www.vcri.org.

Testimonies - in their own words:

"No one would believe me when I didn't feel well. A Samaritan volunteer convinced me to walk into the local emergency room and I got the care I needed."

"No one in my family cares to listen to me but Samaritan volunteers do. They are there because they want to help, not because they are getting paid to listen to me."

"My son was suicidal and I didn't know what to do. A Samaritan volunteer spoke with him and convinced him that depression was treatable with the right care. Today, he's a successful professional with a family. I don't know what I would have done that night without The Samaritans."

*Note: The Samaritans Hotline/Listening Line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year- depending upon the availability of volunteers within a 24-hour period.

If someone is at immediate risk of suicide, please call 911 directly.

The Samaritans, Inc.

Rhode Island's Suicide Prevention Resource Center



BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

The Samaritans' 24-Hour* Free Confidential Hotline- RI's most trusted listening line since 1977!

Call (401) 272-4044

RI Toll Free 1-800-365-4044

***We Listen...We Care...We Help...
Become a Samaritan-
Make a difference in someone's life!***

Visit our website for more information:

www.samaritansri.org