

# New Volunteer Information Package

When **you** need  
someone to **talk** to

## Welcome

I would like to thank you for taking the first step to becoming involved with Samaritans WA. As a result of you contacting us, we are sending this information to give you an overview of the core requirements to becoming a Samaritans WA volunteer.

Samaritans WA have provided emotional support via our phone line since 1967. We aim to help build communities in which people have appropriate support to explore how they feel and to build mental wellness. As our organisation continues to thrive and expand we continue to seek out people who can help us in achieving our vision.

Our volunteers are everyday people who come from every walk of life. Formal qualifications and previous experience are not required as we welcome applications from all members of the general community, with few exceptions.

Upon reading the information in this document, please consider carefully whether the commitment is right for you at this time. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer counsellor, please complete the attached 2022 New Volunteer Application Form and return to us. Should you decide that we are definitely not for you please do let us know.

So we can plan efficiently, please also complete the selection questionnaires and indicate your availability for interview. We aim to complete all selection interviews by Wednesday, 16 February 2022 and will confirm acceptance to volunteer training by Friday, 18 February 2022.

Finally, I would like thank you once again for your interest. We realise that in today's world, finding the time to give to others and become involved in an organisation such as ours is a commitment. We look forward to welcoming you.

Kind regards,



Zrinka Highfield  
Chief Executive Officer

## Our Vision

Samaritans WA aim to help build communities in which people have appropriate support to explore how they feel and to build mental wellness.

We believe that everyone has the capability to find their inner strength and resilience. We understand that sometimes our capability can feel lost, especially when we feel overwhelmed, isolated, disconnected from others, or helpless.

When provided with a safe and caring environment, a listening ear, and the support to explore our feelings, we can uncover our own pathway forward.

## Our Values

Our values are reflective of the organisation – they reflect our history, where we are and who we want to be going forward.



We continually embed our values as time passes through the services we deliver as volunteer counsellors on the phone and in person, in the training we deliver, and in how we conduct ourselves inside and outside of the organisation.

## Our Organisation

Samaritans WA employees, training facilitators and Board Members comprise volunteers and independent legal, psychology, business and financial experts. The organisation is structured to ensure Samaritans WA is well governed, financially sound and meets its social, consumer and community obligations. Key employees include:

- Zrinka Highfield, Chief Executive Officer
- Michelle Stephenson, People and Engagement Manager

## Our Services

### *Phone Support*

Our volunteer counsellors provide emotional support to callers, every day from 8:00am-8:00pm (AWST). The services are anonymous and confidential.

### *Outreach Support*

Our volunteer counsellors provide face-to-face support to consumers, delivered in partnership with other WA based not-for-profit organisations. We work across Mental Health, Homelessness and Family and Domestic Violence.

### *External Workshops and Training*

Samaritans WA employees and associates deliver a range of nationally accredited and bespoke training packages. We work with government, not-for-profit and private organisations.

## Volunteer Counsellor Positions

Our volunteer counsellors help us to provide emotional support to people who are in need via phone and in person.

### *Phone Volunteer Counsellor*

Phone Volunteer Counsellors provide emotional support to callers, every day from 8:00am-8:00pm (AWST). The services are anonymous and confidential and are heavily guided by the Samaritans Emotional Support Model and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) framework.

Phone Volunteer Counsellors typically complete a minimum of a two hour shift each week or a four hour shift every fortnight.

### *Outreach Volunteer Counsellor*

Outreach Volunteer Counsellors provide face-to-face support to consumers, delivered in partnership with other WA based not-for-profit organisations, for example:

- Weekly presence in a residential facility or program, where:
  - Consumers are provided support through incidental interactions;
  - Consumers may be offered the opportunity to book an appointment to speak with a volunteer; and,
  - Consumers may be offered the opportunity to attend an event organised by Samaritans WA, such as facilitation of a group, psychoeducation or specific skills training.
- Visiting a consumer in their home or agreed upon location, where the support provided may be weekly for a period of three to four months.

Outreach Volunteer Counsellors typically complete a minimum of a three hour shift at a consistent time each week.

## Reasons to Become a Volunteer Counsellor

Volunteer counsellors experience a range of benefits and opportunities being a part of the Samaritans WA community, including:



Connection with others



Participation in nationally accredited and other evidence-based training



Opportunity to make a difference and give back



Personal development (e.g. improving communication skills, resilience)



Gain understanding of issues faced by local community



Professional development (e.g. broadening knowledge and experience in supporting others)



Expanding their world-view



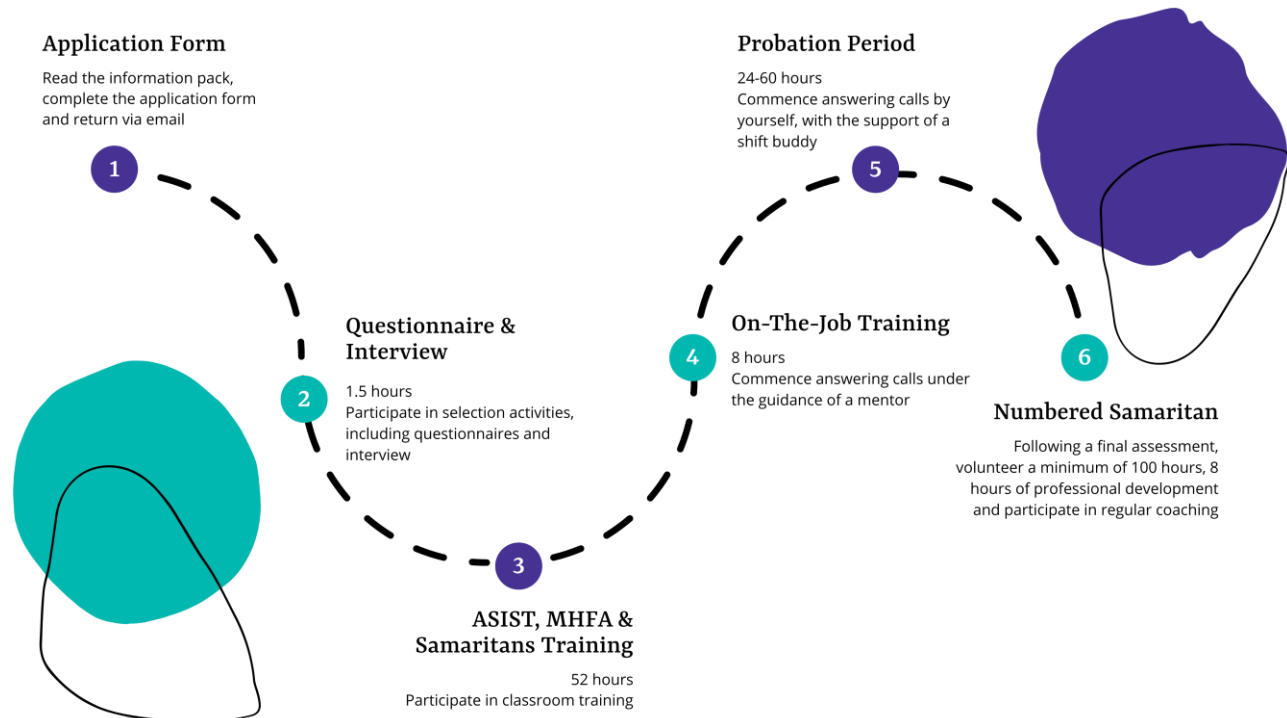
Support for a cause that aligns with their passion



Building a sense of purpose and accomplishment

## Volunteer Counsellor Onboarding Journey

The journey to become a Volunteer Counsellor involves a number of steps, detailed below.



- Step 1**
- Read this information package
  - If you are interested in volunteering, complete the attached Application Form and return to [info@thesamaritans.org.au](mailto:info@thesamaritans.org.au)

- Step 2**
- Complete both selection questionnaires:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7L8K9PB>  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/785LT7L>
  - Indicate your availability for a 45-60 minute selection interview through Doodle:  
[https://doodle.com/poll/rs4war549t6g85sc?utm\\_source=poll&utm\\_medium=link](https://doodle.com/poll/rs4war549t6g85sc?utm_source=poll&utm_medium=link)

- Step 3** Attend ASIST<sup>1</sup> (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training), MHFA<sup>2</sup> (Mental Health First Aid) and Samaritans Training.

Training is conducted in a classroom setting and is run by Samaritans WA training facilitators across eight consecutive weeks.

At the completion of the classroom training, you will complete a final assessment to determine your appropriate use of skills, suitability to continue training and progress as a trainee volunteer.

New volunteer recruitment and training is scheduled twice a year. Please refer to the training schedule for training dates as it is a requirement to attend all sessions.

<sup>1</sup> You will be required to attend ASIST and if you are not able to provide evidence of having completed ASIST training in the last two years.

<sup>2</sup> You will be required to attend MHFA if you are not able to provide evidence of having completed MHFA training in the last three years.

**Step 4** Following the training assessment, we partner you with a Samaritans Mentor to make the transition to what we call OJT (On-the-Job Training), where you begin to start answering calls under the guidance of your mentor.

This step involves a minimum of 4 x 2 hour shifts, but it may be recommended that you require further mentor support shifts.

On your fourth OJT shift, a training facilitator will complete an assessment of your appropriate use of skills, suitability to continue training and progress as a volunteer.

**Step 5** Following the OJT assessment, you progress to the Probation period (your P's) and get to determine your own shift times, how often each week you want to volunteer, and meet a lot of different volunteers as you build on your experience.

This step involves completing a minimum of 24 hours on the phones, checking in during debriefing sessions and informal reviews, and is about solidifying your skills as a Samaritans trainee volunteer.

When you've completed the P requirements we will organise another review to assess your preparedness to become what we call a Numbered Samaritan.

**Step 6** As a Numbered Samaritan, you will be required to complete a minimum of 100 hours of volunteering, minimum of 8 hours of Professional Development training, and regular reviews and call coaching.

Upon completion of this final step, you will become eligible for opportunities as an Outreach Volunteer Counsellor.

### **Expectations to Remain a Current Volunteer**

Every Samaritans volunteer counsellor is asked to commit to the following:

- An average of one 2 hour shift per week or 4 hours per fortnight (minimum commitment of 100 volunteer hours every 12 months).
- Attendance at quarterly professional development events as determined by SamaritansWA – this includes maintaining currency with your ASIST and MHFA accreditation.
- Ongoing service delivery reviews.

## Other Information to Consider

Below we have set out a few important points that you may find useful ahead of attending a selection interview.

- The Samaritans WA is a non-religious organisation.
  - We welcome applications from all members of the general community. Unfortunately we cannot consider you as a Samaritans volunteer counsellor if you:
    - are a currently serving police officer
    - are under 18 years or over 85 years of age
    - have utilised the Samaritans yourself in the past 12 months
    - are currently undergoing psychiatric treatment or psychological counselling and you are not able to provide written assurance from your doctor/counsellor that this work would not be harmful to you or to our clients.
  - We will ask you to obtain a “Working with Children” check from Australia Post when you commence the core Samaritans training. Because you will be classed as a volunteer with us this will cost **\$11.00** (as of 1 July 2015).
  - We will organise for a Volunteer National Police Check on your behalf once you progress to your Probation period of your training.
  - You must be willing to participate in ongoing training and receive feedback.
  - The cost of training with Samaritans is **\$200.00** for ASIST, **\$200.00** for MHFA, and **\$200.00** for the core Samaritans training (as of 1 Jan 2020; excluding GST). All fees associated with the training have to be settled before commencement of training.
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