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1. Purpose

Lifeline Australia takes active measures to ensure the availability of safe, effective, and quality services to people who access its Crisis Support services (Service), as well as ensuring the safety of employees and volunteers who deliver these services.

Lifeline Australia (Lifeline) acknowledges that at times help seekers may display unwelcome calling behaviours, which may be demonstrated through one-time or a series of ongoing interactions with the service. Lifeline also acknowledges the potential and imminent health risks to help seekers who contact the service frequently or on a consistent basis through the repetition of sharing their story and the limitations of the service as a single point contact service for people who are in crisis, distressed, suicidal or supporting someone in crisis. A further consideration is the impact to other help seekers accessing the service due to, at times, a high volume of unwelcome calling behaviour.

As part of its commitment to safety, Lifeline has developed this guideline to ensure the service is used appropriately and as intended by Lifeline and its funders and includes set parameters in managing unwelcome behaviour by providing greater protective measures for current and future help seekers of the service as well as employees and volunteers of Lifeline.

Where appropriate, these terms of use should be read in conjunction with Lifeline Australia’s policies which can be accessed at lifeline policies.

2. Rights and responsibilities of help seekers

Lifeline acknowledges the rights of help seekers to:

- Be treated with respect, dignity, and without judgement
- Expect that privacy and confidentiality will be upheld and to the extent that the law permits, including confidential conversations with Crisis Supporters
- Be provided with accurate information and referrals
- Make a complaint or provide feedback about the Crisis Support service interaction and expect to have the compliant or feedback handled and investigated (where applicable) appropriately
- Have their call recorded should they wish to do so (where call recording is applicable).

Help seekers accept their responsibilities to:

- Be respectful to Crisis Support workers and other employees and volunteers of Lifeline at all times
- Use this service within the parameters set by these terms of use (see below for outline of Criteria to determine unwelcome calling behaviours)

3. Rights and responsibilities of Lifeline Australia

Lifeline Australia acknowledges its rights and responsibilities to:

- Take active measures to provide quality telephone, text and chat services
4. Criteria to determine unwelcome calling behaviours

Lifeline views the following criteria to be inappropriate behaviours when using the service, including but not limited to:

- Death threats
- Threats of physical or psychological harm or violence towards the Crisis Supporter and/or any other employees or volunteers, or property of Lifeline
- Sexually violent
- Sexual harassment
- Abusive interactions towards a Crisis Supporter
- Inappropriate religious, cultural or racial insults
- Homophobic, sexist or other derogatory remarks
- Unwelcome communications made at consistent and/or regular intervals
- Overuse of the Service including five (5) or more interactions over a 24 hour period
- Prank calls.

5. What the service does provide

The service offers confidential, one-to-one support for anyone across Australia who is experiencing a personal crisis, distress, having difficulty coping, contemplating suicide, or supporting someone in crisis. The service is operational 24/7 via phone, text, or online chat and are provided by Crisis Supporters who have undertaken extensive training in the Lifeline Australia’s Crisis Support framework. Crisis Supporters are trained to listen, provide support, and refer appropriately. Under the Crisis Support framework, the service is designed as a one-time contact for people as outlined above.

Crisis Supporters may assist people who are experiencing loneliness to work through their feelings and thoughts so that the help seeker can establish their own strategies to improve social connections in their life. Where a help seeker makes regular contact with the service for social reasons, the Crisis Supporter may limit the conversation to be available for help seekers who are in crisis situations or at imminent risk. Lifeline reserves the right to manage such calls appropriately.

Lifeline caters to people with hearing impairment, through the National Relay Service, and non-English speakers, through the Translating and Interpreting Services. Further information is available on our website at Language Support (lifeline.org.au).
6. **What the service does not provide**
   - Medical advice, diagnosis, prescriptions for medications, or treatment for medical conditions
   - Psychological treatment including counselling, case management, or therapy
   - Friendship, intimate relationships, or information sharing of Crisis Supporters personal information
   - Consistent, ongoing, or long-term support (help seekers are encouraged to discuss longer term support strategies with their doctor, therapist, or other support services who provide longer term support).

7. **Restrictions to the service**
   If a help seeker is deemed by the Crisis Supporter to be displaying unwelcome calling behaviour (as outlined in *Criteria to determine unwelcome calling behaviours* section), the Crisis Supporter may follow these procedures to include:
   - Provide a warning to the help seeker that the behaviour is inappropriate and/or unwelcome including a brief explanation of how the behaviour is inappropriate
   - Where the help seeker continues with unwelcome calling behaviour, the Crisis Supporter may terminate the call, and may refer to authorities.

8. **Escalation of unacceptable behaviour**
   Where there is frequent or ongoing unwelcome calling behaviour by the help seeker, Lifeline will assess the situation on an individual basis and decide what further actions are required. These may include:
   - Setting restrictions on access to the service
   - Cease or suspend access to the service
   - Engage with authorities and/or take protective action through law enforcement
   - Escalate the matter under the *Telecommunication Act 1979 (Cth)* for further warnings and/or suspension from the service.

9. **Appeals**
   Lifeline takes active measures to ensure the provision of quality service to all Australians who experience crisis situations, and has robust processes to manage feedback, complaints, and incident management.

   In the event that services are suspended or discontinued due to either unwelcome calling behaviour or where outside the service provision scope, the help seeker may appeal or provide feedback via the Lifeline Australia website at [Contact us - Lifeline Australia](#).

10. **Privacy**
    Lifeline securely stores transcripts of text and online chat interactions, and recordings of telephone conversations where consent by the help seeker has been granted. These transcripts and recordings may be used for the primary purposes outlined in the Privacy Policy
under Policies - Lifeline Australia.

For important information regarding access to your personal information, and further information about how we treat your personal information please refer to our Privacy Policy.

In situations where Lifeline believe that life is in immediate danger, Lifeline has a duty of care to contact emergency services. In these circumstances, Lifeline will disclose any identifiable and relevant information obtained during a Crisis Support interaction or conversation to emergency services.