

GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL LINE GUIDELINES

1. The location of the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line is to be kept confidential.
2. Information received over the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line, or found in personal files in the office, is to be kept in the strictest of confidence. This confidential knowledge and information is, under no circumstances, to be shared, now or ever, with anyone outside of immediate Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line involvement. Line workers must also concern themselves with keeping non-line workers from accessing confidential information.
3. The Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line is not to be in operation when people other than Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line workers are present. When the line is in operation, each shift is ideally to be covered by one man and one woman.
4. Names, addresses, phone numbers, and personal information regarding any Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line workers are not to be given out over the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line. Information about who is working which shift is also not to be given out.
5. Only those so designated by the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line are to be Peer Counsellors. When a request for Peer Counselling arises, the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line member responsible for Peer Counselling must be notified. Arrangements are to be made with the caller to meet with two Peer Counsellors in a public place. Do not move on to another place, and do not change the place of the meeting without notifying the aforementioned Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line member. Ideally, a woman and a man are to go on each Peer Counselling session.
6. Qualifications for Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line volunteers:
 - a) Each volunteer must be at least nineteen years of age.
 - b) Workers must have no personal, emotional, psychological, or legal problems that would interfere with their ability to help others and their ability to contribute to the Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line.
 - c) Workers must complete an application form, have an interview, complete the training procedure, and be willing to work within Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Line ideology and to follow procedures and guidelines.
 - d) Workers must have a positive and healthy attitude about being lesbian, gay, or bisexual.

Revised June, 1993

**QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE
GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL LINE/PEER COUNSELLOR - continued**

Empathy: You should be able to sense the feelings of an other as if they were your own; to be able to mentally move in and around their world, to some extent. This does not mean that you are to lose your own identity. Also, empathy does not mean sympathy. You don't feel sorry for someone . . . you know how they feel, and transmit that.

Objectivity: You should view things without a bias, without prejudging . . . look at things openly and honestly.

Relating to Others: You should have a good ability to relate to others well in order to counsel well.

Genuineness: This is not a technique you can learn. Either you are genuinely interested in and concerned about the caller, or you are not. The caller can usually pick up on this too.

Non-dominance: It is important not to pace or to direct the conversation too much. The caller knows best what they have to say, and when they are ready to say it. You can't listen well when you are dominating things, and usually, what the caller needs most is to be listened to.

Listening: This is an art in itself, and comes from having the needs of the caller at heart . . . from being sensitive, genuine, and concerned.

Positive Regard: You should treat the caller as a person, regardless of their behavior at the moment. The caller should be treated as a person with potentialities. This is also not a technique, but a feeling, which the caller will probably pick up on. A caller will pick up on a healthy attitude. This may help a caller with a lot of negativism about themselves.