



# Accidental Counsellor Foundations

## Basic skills for dealing with people in crisis

### Have you ever had to step into the shoes of The Accidental Counsellor?

The Accidental Counsellor Foundations Workshop offers a great set of toolbox skills for those moments when you might least expect to be called upon in a counselling or caring capacity. In community services work, we may often be the first point of contact for someone in crisis needing immediate assistance. Even without a formal qualification in counselling, a toolbox of counselling techniques and questioning frameworks provides the necessary support to clients when they are anxious, angry, experiencing loss or a challenging time in their life.

Participants gain a greater understanding of how to communicate more effectively and learn strategies to help foster effective and trusting relationships with clients or peers. In this workshop, we ask participants to reflect on personal values and beliefs and how they influence interactions with clients. How you respond will create an impact on the person in need of support or assistance and often determine the outcome of your interactions. This workshop will provide you with necessary skills and tools to be able to step into the shoes of an accidental counsellor momentarily, respond appropriately, efficiently and effectively to people in crisis or distress when there may not be a professional immediately available. This workshop is highly complementary to other skills-for-life training, the quintessential element being able to listen well with respect and empathy.

**The workshop is flexible and interactive, encouraging participants to ask questions, share their experiences, practise skills and engage in self-reflection. The Accidental Counsellor Foundations Workshop can be delivered as either a one-day condensed version, or a two-day more comprehensive workshop.**

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- Comprehend how values can get in the way of good listening
- Differentiate between effective communication and counselling
- Determine the urgency of a situation by utilising appropriate assessment skills
- Engage empathetically with others using specific counselling and communication skills such as rapport building, reflection of feelings, paraphrasing, active listening
- Develop specific questioning techniques to suit different situations
- Identify and respond appropriately to ethical dilemmas
- Be ethical in your approach when dealing with sensitive information
- Be able to set boundaries and limits yet still maintain an appropriate level of involvement
- Appreciate the importance of debriefing and caring-for-you-as-carer after emotionally-charged interactions.

Lifeline is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes, preserves and protects life. The mission of our training division is to build community capacity and skills for life through a range of specialised training programs to meet the needs of individuals and groups.

For further information  
Contact Dr June Anderson  
Phone 02 4940 2000  
Email [june.anderson@lifeline.org.au](mailto:june.anderson@lifeline.org.au)  
[www.lifelinehunter.org.au](http://www.lifelinehunter.org.au)

 **Lifeline**  
**Saving Lives**  
Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.