

working at Kids Helpline

what our counsellors say

At Kids Helpline, working in a virtual helpline environment is a unique and rewarding experience, but it also comes with challenges that are different from both face-to-face counselling and other online services.

Here's what our counsellors say about the realities of the role.

what makes Kids Helpline unique?

- 🗣️ *"I came from another online support service, and one thing that struck me about Kids Helpline was the flexibility. We offer everything from one-off sessions to ongoing support, and we work with kids as young as five right up to 25. It's a diverse and dynamic environment."*
- ⚠️ **Challenges:**
 - Some young people want **regular, ongoing support**, while others prefer **one-time crisis support**, requiring flexibility from counsellors.
 - We work with a **wide age range (5-25 years)**, meaning counsellors must adjust their approach based on the developmental stage of the young person.
- ✨ **Opportunities & Benefits:**
 - Kids Helpline offers **one off and multi-session support**, giving young people continuity when they need it.
 - The chance to **support young people across different ages and life stages**, building a broad range of counselling skills.
 - Counsellors develop expertise in **both crisis intervention and ongoing support**.



how do you make a connection without being seen?

- 🧠 "At first, I wondered how I'd build trust when I couldn't see the young person in front of me. But I quickly learned that without visual cues, I became a better listener. I tune into tone, pacing, and silences in a way I never did before. It's a different skill set, but just as powerful."
- ⚠️ **Challenges:**
 - No body language means relying on voice and words to assess a young person's state of mind.
 - Some young people prefer text-based support, requiring strong written communication skills.
- ✨ **Opportunities & Benefits:**
 - Young people sometimes open up more **because they don't feel watched or judged.**
 - Counsellors become **highly attuned to verbal and emotional cues**, improving core counselling skills.

what are the realities of shift work?

- 🧠 "I had never worked nights before, so adjusting to shift work was a learning curve. But I've found a rhythm that works for me. There's something special about supporting a young person at 2 AM when they feel like no one else is there for them."
- ⚠️ **Challenges:**
 - **Unusual hours** can take time to adjust to, and it's important to develop healthy sleep and self-care habits.
 - Evening and night shifts can mean working while family and friends have typical 9-5 jobs.
- ✨ **Opportunities & Benefits:**
 - **More flexibility** in work schedules.
 - Night shifts can mean **fewer interruptions** and the chance for **more in-depth conversations** with young people.
 - The ability to **support young people when they may have nowhere else to turn.**



how do you manage the volume & variety of contacts?

- 🧠 "I used to work in face-to-face counselling where sessions were structured and had a clear end time. Here, every session is different. Some are quick check-ins, others are crisis calls. I've learned how to balance being fully present with each young person while also being mindful of service demand."
- ⚠️ **Challenges:**
 - Sessions don't have a fixed duration—some are brief, while others require **complex crisis support**.
 - Managing time is essential to ensure **each young person receives support while keeping the service accessible for others**.
- ✨ **Opportunities & Benefits:**
 - Learning **adaptive time management skills** that enhance both counselling effectiveness and service accessibility.
 - Becoming skilled at **providing impactful support in a short amount of time**, which is valuable across many counselling settings.



how do you handle crisis work and risk?

- 🗣️ *"One of the most intense but rewarding aspects of this job is working with young people in crisis. Some calls are about everyday struggles, while others involve serious risk—self-harm, suicide, or abuse disclosures. It can be tough, but we're well-supported, and knowing we've helped someone stay safe makes it worth it."*
- ⚠️ **Challenges:**
 - Calls can escalate quickly, requiring **calm and structured responses** under pressure.
 - Without face-to-face cues, assessing **imminent risk** can be more complex.
 - Managing **emotional impact and vicarious trauma** is essential for long-term resilience.
- ✨ **Opportunities & Benefits:**
 - Kids Helpline provides **clear protocols and processes** to guide crisis interventions.
 - Supervisors and clinical support staff are **always available** to assist in high-risk situations.
 - Counsellors **develop specialised crisis response skills**, making them highly skilled in risk management.
 - The ability to **make a life-saving difference** in critical moments is deeply meaningful and fulfilling

What is support like for counsellors?

- 🗣️ *"One of the best things about working here is that I'm never on my own, even if I am working remotely. There's always a supervisor available, and we can access support while in session and afterwards in debriefs, I also get monthly practice supervision and support and coaching from my line manager. And there's also ongoing learning and peer support. This job can be intense, but there's a real sense of community."*
- ⚠️ **Challenges:**
 - The work can be **emotionally demanding**, especially when handling crisis cases.
 - Remote work means counsellors must be **proactive in seeking support** when needed.
- ✨ **Opportunities & Benefits:**
 - **Regular line management, supervision and debriefing** help counsellors process challenging cases.
 - Ongoing **training and professional development** ensure counsellors continue to grow their skills.
 - **Strong peer support** fosters a team environment, even in a virtual setting.





Working at Kids Helpline is fast-paced, dynamic, and deeply meaningful. It requires adaptability, strong communication skills, and a commitment to supporting children and young people in a virtual support environment. While there are challenges, knowing you've made a difference in a young person's life at a critical moment is truly rewarding.

