

**Accreditation: Preparing for the Site Visit and Becoming a Site Evaluator
Accreditation for Crisis Line Programs from CONTACT USA**

Jan Schoop
Northwest Indiana Community Action Corporation
5518 Calumet Ave
Hammond, IN 46320
jschoop@nwica-ca.org
Phone: 219-937-3500 x 7178

Jo-Ann Hoffman
Consultant, CONTACT USA
P. O. Box 11078
Trenton, NJ 08620
cusa@prodigy.net
860-464-2144

An organization that serves the public and seeks the support of the community needs to set standards for its operations.

The purpose of an on-site accreditation program is to help strengthen each center or crisis line program and to increase the already proven effectiveness of telephone crisis programs.

Other benefits of on-site accreditation are:

- Stimulation of crisis line programs to strive for optimal standards of service;
- Validation of a program that is performing according to nationally recognized standards;
- Consultation tailored to the needs of an individual center;
- Credibility with funding agencies and other human service agencies;
- Access to criteria for systematic, ongoing self-evaluation; and
- Assurance that the minimum operating standards for service are met.

In 2005 the Board of Directors of CONTACT USA voted to extend accreditation to crisis line programs not currently members of CONTACT USA. This decision entailed a thorough review and revision of the Accreditation Manual to reflect current best practices and terminology in use in crisis line organizations. Several components were added. The current revision reflects input from many center directors and Accreditation Site Evaluators based on their experiences in going through the accreditation process.

In 2006 revisions were again made to reflect the industries best practices.

There are seven standards for non-CONTACT USA crisis line programs and eight for CONTACT USA members with components to each:

- Governance
- Fiscal and Business
- Training
- Supervision and Evaluation of Crisis Line Specialists
- Service
- Community Integration
- Facilities and Equipment
- CONTACT USA Membership

Both National Suicide Helplines recognize and accept the accreditation of CONTACT USA.

To return to the Table of Contents for Convening XXXI, press the back button on your browser.

