

## HOTLINE VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

National Hotline Phone Number: 855-222-5542 (855-2 CALL GA)

The main goal of the volunteer answering a hotline call is *to get the caller to a meeting as soon as possible.*

To be a hotline volunteer, you must attend Gamblers Anonymous meetings on a weekly basis and be abstinent for a minimum of one year. If not, you are unable to volunteer for the hotline. **We must practice what we preach!**

Remember...by helping others we help ourselves.

Keep a calm voice as most callers are under a lot of stress and don't know what to do in their situation.

*Be brief!* Again, our main function is to get the caller to a meeting as soon as possible. It is not our job to solve their problems over the phone.

If the caller has access to the internet, suggest that they get meeting information online ([gamblersanonymous.org](http://gamblersanonymous.org)). There they can find an in-person, virtual or teleconference meeting that is most accessible. Otherwise, the volunteer can provide meeting information from the G.A. website or with a local meeting list. Have a current meeting list available at all times.

Make sure your area provides the International Service Office with the latest meeting information including state or province, city or town, facility location (church, hospital, etc.), address, day of the week the meeting takes place, time of meeting and any other pertinent information (i.e., meets in room 200). Our ISO website provides the only sanctioned meeting information.

If the caller wants information about our program, use your own experience. Talk about your experience, strength, and hope and how the GA program saved your life. Try and connect with the caller, as it lets the caller know they are not in this fight alone. You can also refer them to the G.A. website ([gamblersanonymous.org](http://gamblersanonymous.org)).

Acknowledge that it took courage to make this call. Advise the caller that the next step in addressing this problem is to attend meetings, leading to a better life.

Emphasize the fact that G.A. has been in existence for over 50 years and has helped thousands of people in similar circumstances. Encourage them to be open at meetings and let them know that what they have done throughout their gambling careers will not shock anyone. It has all been done before and the more straightforward they are, the more likely they will be successful in G.A.

Should you receive calls from family members or friends of a gambler who are seeking help, please tell them about Gam-Anon in their area or direct them to the Gam-Anon website ([gam-anon.org](http://gam-anon.org))

If you cannot take calls during your assigned time for any extended period, please notify your local hotline coordinator.

Should you relapse, no longer attend meetings or wish to be removed from the volunteer list for any reason, please advise the hotline coordinator.

We believe that the greatest benefits for a new member are obtained at a meeting. Show understanding and give encouragement but avoid getting into a counseling session.

When initial contact is made with the caller, the goal is to get the caller to the first available meeting. Do not recommend that they wait until the next meeting at your own room. It is important that this person gets to a meeting as soon as possible.

If the caller is despondent and/or suicidal, do not attempt to remedy the situation. Tell the caller to call a crisis hotline or suicide prevention hotline.

If the caller feels they need immediate help and cannot wait for a meeting, stress that G.A. is neither affiliated with nor endorses other programs. Do not refer to an outside agency or private therapist!

We are not attorneys, financial advisors or therapists – do not give legal advice or suggestions!

If the caller expresses concerns over financial pressures, indicate that G.A. has methods to address these issues which will be made available to the caller after a brief period of attendance at meetings.

Do not give out any other member's phone number to callers. If asked, tell the caller that they can get a phone list at the meeting.

Thank you for volunteering for our hotline.