The Basics of Crisis Line Calls
Questions You Can Ask a Client

• Are you ok?
• Is it safe to talk?
• Do you need medical help?
• How can I help you?
• Do you need a place to stay?
• Do you feel safe where you are?
• When did this start happening?
• Has your partner hurt you before?
• Will you be safe when your partner comes home?
• Do you have a job or a source of money?
• Have you called the police?
• Have the children been hurt/Are they safe?
• Do you have anyone you can trust or talk to or stay with?
• Can you come to our office to talk with a staff member the next business day?
Crisis Call Reference Sheet

On-Call Staff Member

- There will be a staff member on call at all times. If you have an emergency or have any questions or concerns during your shift, do not hesitate to call.

Confidentially

- Keep all information received from caller, staff and volunteers confidential. Feel free to share your thoughts and feelings about calls with Bright Horizons staff only.
Legal Questions

• We are unable to give any legal advice, if a victim has concerns, assure them that we are here to listen, but we are not lawyers and they need to contact a lawyer.

Request for Staff Member

• If a caller requests a specific volunteer or staff member, tell the caller that the person is not working and ask them how you can help.
Call from someone you know

- If you receive a call from someone you know, you can either remain anonymous or identify yourself.
- At this point, you can ask the caller to decide if they wish to speak to another advocate or if they are comfortable talking to you.
- Remind them that you are required to keep their information confidential.
Chatty callers

- Try to keep the focus on the caller’s specific reason for calling.
- Let them know they can feel free to tell their story, but try to keep them focused on their immediate needs.
Emergency Situation

1.) Determine if you need to call 911

2.) If 911 is called:
   • A.) Give dispatch directions to the house
   • B.) Call the back up staff member
     • Refer to Crisis Line calendar first and then the staff roster for phone numbers

3.) If 911 is NOT called:
   • A.) Decide if the client needs medical attention
   • B.) Let staff member know about the problem
   • C.) Take them to hospital or their doctor (if advised by staff)
Determine if the client is suitable for shelter:

1.) Find out the client’s situation

2.) Get a name and number and let them know you will call a staff member to find out the “status” of shelter.

3.) Call staff member to decide if this caller is suitable for shelter

4.) When you call the client back, make sure to block your phone number by using * 67+10 digit number
If They are Suitable for Shelter:

1.) Never meet the client at the house

2.) Always meet in a public place such as police station, hospital, gas station, or some other OPEN place of business

3.) If client has their own car, have them follow you to the house and have them park down the street so their car is not directly in front of the house.

4.) The closet across from the office will have intake sheets and check list of items to go over with the client
   - A.) Fill out name, phone number, emergency contact, and have them sign the shelter agreement.
   - B.) Go through the items on the check list with the client as you show them to their room.

5.) Leave intake form and shelter agreement under office door for staff

6.) Let client know a staff member will meet with them in the morning of the next business day.
No Sayers/Difficult Callers/Under the Influence of Drugs or Alcohol/Chatty Callers

• If a caller does not like any of your suggestions and you have exhausted all options for this caller’s situation or if they seem to just want to talk and talk, kindly let them know that we need to keep the line open for emergencies, but we would love to see them in the office and a staff member can talk to them there.

• Same thing for those whom you know or suspect are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Remind them of our services but we can help them once the drugs or alcohol are worn off.
Boundaries

• If you ever get a call that you are uncomfortable dealing with or talking about, ALWAYS call the on call staff member.

• If a caller has crossed any personal boundaries whether it is emotional, cultural, religious, or just plain uneasy for you to deal with, tell them that you are no longer able to help with this situation, but you will get someone who can help.

• Call the staff member and let them know the caller's name and number if you were able to get one.

• NEVER feel like you have to sit through a call if it has crossed your personal boundaries!
Third Party Callers

• You may receive a call from a concerned neighbor, friend, or relative. They may want Bright Horizons to contact this person.

• Find out when we can safely contact the person in concern and pass the information on to the staff person the next day.

• Offer the caller support and tell them we can send information to pass on to their friend or relative.

• Encourage them to let their friend or relative know that all information is confidential.
Third Party Callers (Cont.)

• You may get a call from a concerned neighbor, friend, relative, the police or another agency wanting to know information about an existing client.

• We NEVER give information about our client to anyone, regardless of who they are, without a release of information.

• Your standard response for any inquiries about clients is “I can not confirm or deny having worked with that person, but I can post a message”

• Same thing goes for a call from an abuser or someone you suspect to be an abuser.
Donations

If you receive a call from someone who has items to donate, inform them that we only accept donations during our business hours, which are Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Important Information

- Name and phone number (if it is safe to call them back)
- What’s their situation?
- Is the situation a DV or SA situation? (Use best judgment)
- What do they need right now?
- Are they safe? Are the children safe?
- Give referrals if requested or needed
- Keep track of the time call was made and how long it lasted.

If the situation is not DV/SA
- Refer the caller to other resources that may better fit their needs
- Remind the caller that our agency is for DV/SA victims only

If the situation is DV/SA
- Inform the caller of our services
- Take them to shelter if needed
- Let the caller know locations of our office and hours we are open
- Encourage the caller to talk to an advocate at our office