

Lifeline Call Recording Greeting Tip Sheet (Updated 12/4/2019)

This document shares information and guidance for crisis centers about the recent update to the Lifeline's greeting that states that calls may be recorded for quality assurance purposes.

Counselors should become familiar with your center's call recording policy. If your center does not have a policy, please craft one.

If asked by callers, answer questions about recording and monitoring practices at your center. You do not need to go into a lot of detail but it is important to be straightforward about the use of call recordings at your center.

If a caller expresses discomfort with calls being recorded:

Fully explore and address the caller's feelings about call recording before attempting to proceed further with the call. Address these concerns, as appropriate (see specific Q&A below), and make sure to provide clarification on any mistaken assumptions or fears about the recording. Share with the caller that the Lifeline is a confidential service and does not disseminate information about Lifeline calls, chats, or call recordings.

If your crisis center does not record calls:

Clarify that the caller has connected with a crisis center that does not currently record calls. Explain that they heard the message because other crisis centers that are part of the crisis center network may record and/or monitor calls for quality assurance and training purposes, and the Lifeline is required to alert callers of the possibility.

If a caller asks for a copy of a call recording:

The Lifeline is a confidential service, and so all requests for caller information must be come through a court order. *The Lifeline does not recommend releasing recordings without a court order.* We are committed to protecting caller information, including recordings, as much as possible.

If a caller asks how long records are kept or if they ask who has access to these recordings:

Your crisis center will have its own records retention policy. Many crisis centers delete recorded calls from their systems after 30 days. In addition, some centers will de-identify calls and use them for quality assurance, evaluation, and training purposes, dependent on the best practices of the center and state requirements.

Court Order information:

Many organizations do not provide copies of recorded conversations unless they receive a court order. Consult with your center's legal counsel regarding any court orders received.

Other considerations about call recording for crisis centers to consider:

- **Recording outbound calls:** If a Lifeline center also records outbound calls, proper notification is also required in all states with a two-party notification law. *Since callers using mobile cellphones can be from anywhere and reach your state, it is best to assume the two-party notification laws apply to all Lifeline callers.* Have your staff notify each outbound call that they are "calling on a recorded line."
- **Retention Policy:** Any center that records calls should also have a written and enforced records retention policy in place. A regular schedule for deletion of call recordings is recommended.
- **Data Security:** Data must be stored on a secure server, access to recorded call data must be restricted, written policies governing access and sharing of recorded calls must be in place.