

## What is LIFELINE?

The Lifeline Foundation provides confidential information, referral, and support services to USW members, their participating employers, and their families.

Lifeline was established by the United Steelworkers in 1974 as a charitable, not-for-profit organization so that the union, in collaboration with employers who hold collective agreements with the union, could provide a joint union-management employee assistance program for its members. Its purpose is to assist workers and their families manage difficult issues in their personal and working lives.

A volunteer board of directors, composed of five USW members and three employer members, governs Lifeline. Operated cooperatively with Labour Community Services of Toronto, Lifeline is supported financially by USW local unions in Toronto and 30 participating employers.

## What Can LIFELINE do for me?

Most workers who use the services provided by Lifeline do so, on their own initiative, because there is something in their life causing them concern or difficulty at home, work, or both. The Lifeline Coordinator can help with all types of problems of a personal nature.

### Some of the many issues addressed by Lifeline include:

- **Alcohol, drug, and other addictions**
- **Depression, anxiety, stress, and other mental health issues**
- **Marital, family, and other relationship issues**
- **Interpersonal issues**
- **Financial or legal difficulties**
- **Problem gambling**
- **Violence issues**

The Lifeline Coordinator will assist you in clarifying your personal issue and then link you with the services in your community that will be most effective in helping you resolve your difficulty.

Lifeline links you to community services, self help groups or treatment programs that are most suitable to your situation. You are encouraged to ask any questions you wish about Lifeline and the agencies that the Coordinator discusses with you.

The Lifeline Coordinator maintains contact with you in order to make certain that you are comfortable with the service you have chosen and to ensure that you are receiving the help you need.

## What does it cost?

The services of Lifeline are paid for by your local union and participating employers. There is no cost to you for contacting Lifeline. While the referral service is free, some of the services that you are referred to charge user fees. User fees are based on your ability to pay. However, there are many services that are either free or are low-cost. The Lifeline Coordinator will make every effort to connect you with services that are best suited to your economic situation.

## What about my privacy?

Your right and your family's right to privacy are protected at all times in the Lifeline program. The service operates outside of your workplace in order to protect your privacy.

Personal difficulties may sometimes cause workers to require time away from work to resolve a problem. With your consent, the Lifeline Coordinator can act as a liaison between the community agency and your workplace should you require such a leave. You have the right to withdraw this consent at any time.

## Who in the Union or in the Company Will Know If I Make an Appointment?

If you use the service on your own initiative no one will ever know that you used Lifeline unless you tell them. Should there be a need to inform the union or your employer only you can grant the Lifeline Coordinator permission to do so. Permission is deemed granted when you sign a "Release of Information" form provided to you by the Coordinator.

## What if I'm using Lifeline at the request of my union and/or employer?

If you are formally asked to contact Lifeline because your personal problems are affecting your ability to work you may have to demonstrate that you are seeking help in order to protect your job. If this is the case, the Coordinator will work with you and your union representative to ensure that your employer receives the documentation they require to show you are attempting to help yourself. Only you can grant permission to the Coordinator to provide this information. Permission is granted when you sign a "Release of Information" form.

You may be informally asked to contact Lifeline because there is a concern that a personal problem may be adversely affecting you and eventually your ability to work. If this is the case, there is no need for the Coordinator to contact the union or your employer unless you ask. Again, the Coordinator will only do so once you sign a "Release of Information" form.

## Who is the Lifeline Coordinator?

The Lifeline Coordinator is an employee of Labour Community Services and a member of USW Local 8300. Since February, 2005, Sharon Clarke has acted as the Coordinator.

Since 1987, Sharon has worked at Labour Community Services in various capacities. Some of her job duties have included the provision of information, referral, and support services to union representatives and union members. As a union educator, Sharon has designed and developed a number of courses and workshops dealing with occupational stress, harassment, violence in the workplace, violence against women, substance use and abuse, effective listening, and conflict communication skills. Most recently she worked as the United Way Services Coordinator dealing with fundraising, fund allocation, and volunteer management on behalf of unions and union members in Toronto.

In addition to certificates and courses in labour studies, Sharon holds Bachelor and Master of Social Work degrees and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from York University.

## DONATE TO LIFELINE

The Lifeline Foundation accepts donations from individuals and organizations who want to support its work. These donations entitle the donor to receive a charitable tax receipt.

For more information or for information about donating to the Foundation through your workplace United Way campaign, please contact the Lifeline Coordinator at: 416-977-6888 or [life\\_line@bellnet.ca](mailto:life_line@bellnet.ca)



*The Lifeline Foundation provides confidential information, referral, and support services, either by phone or in person, to United Steelworker members, their participating employers, and their families.*

**IF YOU NEED HELP CALL: 416-977-6888**

**1-877-801-7762** (long distance callers only)

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

**OR BY EMAIL: [life\\_line@bellnet.ca](mailto:life_line@bellnet.ca)**

2 LOCATIONS:

**UNITED STEELWORKERS TORONTO AREA OFFICE**  
**25 CECIL STREET**  
College & Spadina

**ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR BUILDING**  
**SUITE 603 - 15 GERVAIS DRIVE**  
Northeast corner Don Mills Road & Eglinton Avenue East