

Is this you?

- knowledge / skills in micro- and macro-counselling
- empathetic
- tolerant, patient and tactful when dealing with people
- team player.

What is a telephone counsellor?

Health Contact Centre (HCC) telephone counsellors work with consumers over the phone using structured interventions to support consumers through the process of behaviour change.

All new staff undertake a comprehensive, competency-based training program which authorises them to deliver evidence-based brief interventions on behalf of Queensland Health.

What does a telephone counsellor do?

The primary responsibility of HCC telephone counsellors is to provide individually tailored smoking cessation support, encouragement and resources via Queensland Health's Quitline (13QUIT). They do this by:

- assessing nicotine dependence
- determining habits and routines around smoking
- discussing motivations and barriers for the smoker (motivational interviewing)
- individually tailoring a quit plan for each caller
- offering ongoing support through the quitting process
- providing resources.

“I really enjoy the variety I get from working as a telephone counsellor. Queensland Health provides a supportive working environment, and I know I’m helping make a difference in people’s lives every time I come to work.”

Joanna Idle – Telephone Counsellor



The 5As (ask, assess, advise, assist, arrange) process is utilised as a brief intervention framework, with motivational interviewing the primary tool for assisting consumers.

Other duties of HCC telephone counsellors include:

- making outbound calls, and collecting and collating data relating to:
 - Queensland Health's staff quit smoking program
 - GP referrals
 - the national smoke-free pregnancy project (in conjunction with Cancer Council Queensland)
 - SMS call backs
- providing input to the continuous quality cycle of the Health Contact Centre
- participating in learning and development activities and peer support through clinical supervision.

Where can telephone counsellors work?

The Health Contact Centre provides a platform from which a variety of services are delivered. Currently, and in the future, services include chronic disease management, early intervention, referral and counselling services, and crisis intervention.

Health Contact Centre staff benefit from flexible shift patterns, choice of part time or casual positions, and involvement in informal and formal support networks. Telephone counsellors receive specialised training, gain experience in decision-making and are supported in their new role through a comprehensive training and development framework.

The Health Contact Centre is located in the Brisbane suburb of Mt Gravatt, close to public transport with secure parking facilities and is easily accessible for staff in Brisbane metropolitan areas.

Can telephone counsellors specialise?

There are post graduate certificates available in counselling and telephone counselling, and many opportunities within the service to develop specialist skills and knowledge. Examples include, development of coaching and teaching skills, gaining knowledge in information and communication technology, and experience in workforce planning and development. In addition there are opportunities for development within clinical and management areas.

There is scope for career progression within the service. There are team leader positions which provide coaching, leadership and support to telephone counsellors. A number of staff have additional training in specific call centre practices and applications, in order to deliver training programs and provide expertise within a given area.

How do you become a telephone counsellor?

There are no mandatory qualifications to be a telephone counsellor, however people who have or are working towards qualifications in the health and human services (eg. counselling, psychology, social work) are encouraged to apply.

The recruitment and selection process includes a short written application followed by a face to face panel interview. Both processes require the applicant to meet a number of key skill requirements, specified in the role description.

On successful recruitment to the service, there is an eight day competency based training and induction program, followed by a 12 week preceptorship period.

Where can I find more information?

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A/Quitline Manager

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13HEALTH

www.health.qld.gov.au/13health

Information and job advertisements for recruitment cycles are available in newspapers and on the HCC and SEEK websites: www.health.qld.gov.au/wwwhccp

To find out more about the exciting career opportunities in Queensland Health and what we can offer you go to:

www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus

Do great things every day