Essential helpline skills programme

10:30	**Welcome, introduction and expectations**
11:00	**What is a helpline and how do they help?** • Identify the context in which your helpline operates • Explore how helplines support their service users
11:15	**Stages of the call** Describe the different stages of the call process
11:30	**Stage One: Beginnings** • Explain what's important at the beginning of a call • Understand how a caller's circumstances can make both access and communication difficult • Define what we mean by the "soundscape" of the call • Explain the impact of "soundscape" on helpline work • Distinguish key differences between the phone and face to face
12.30	**Lunch**
13:15	**Stage Two: Exploration** • List the assumptions it is possible to make based on the voice • Explain how to minimise the assumptions we make on the helpline • Know what is meant by active listening skills • Employ appropriate verbal responses
14:00	**Stage Three: Clarification** • List the key differences between types of questions • Recognise when to use questions effectively during the call • Know what reflecting back and paraphrasing mean and the difference between them • Employ active listening skills sensitively to include reflecting back, accurate paraphrasing and using clarifying questions
14:50	**Break**
15:10	**Stage Four: Identifying next steps** • Understanding the importance of providing options • Identify appropriate non-directive language to use when exploring options with callers, giving information and signposting • Practice skills for exploring options
16:00	**Stage Five: Endings** • Employ appropriate skills to end different types of calls
16:20	**Stage Six: After the call** • Understand how to look after yourself after a call
16:30	**Close**