

An Introduction to Nightline Freiburg e.V.

Nightline Freiburg is a listening and information telephone hotline. The hotline's staff is available to lend a sympathetic ear to Freiburg students with personal problems seven days a week from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. under the number 2039375. All staff members are students themselves, which serves to create a relaxed and open atmosphere in which callers are on an equal footing with



Picture: Nightline e.V.

their conversational partner. Every telephone call remains anonymous and is treated with strict confidentiality. The student callers have the opportunity to speak about small or large worries and problems in an impartial setting. The staff does not offer pre-made solutions but rather helps the callers to find a solution on their own. Oftentimes, however, the callers are just looking for someone to listen to and understand their problems. The most common topics are problems with studies, money, and relationships.

However, the Nightline is also there to help students who do not have a specific problem but just need someone to talk to and can't reach anyone else at the moment. The staff is also happy to answer questions about studies and life in Freiburg. In addition, since the Nightline is in contact with other regional and national counseling services and is familiar with their offerings, the staff can refer callers to other services if the Nightline itself cannot help them. The Nightline has taken over 1,500 calls since it was launched – from a total of only four calls in the first semester to around 200 last semester.

The association was founded in 2002 and is thus celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. Back then it was just a small group of students, but it has now grown to almost 60 members. They work in a voluntary capacity – on the telephone and in the other activities of the organization, such as training programs and public relations work. To prepare for the telephone work, the volunteers take a four-day training based on the principles of client-centered counseling developed by Carl Rogers. They also participate in regular trainings with external instructors and receive periodic supervision by psychologists, thus ensuring the continually improvement of our service.

The prize money will be used, first of all, to increase public awareness for the service, for instance through the purchase of more advertising materials. Our goal is to make all students aware of our service so that they have the chance to use it. In addition, we can now also afford to pay for more psychological supervisors, a measure which has become necessary in the past semesters due to the strong increase in our membership. Finally, we are also planning on introducing an e-mail counseling service as a complement to our telephone-based counseling, and the prize money will help us raise the funds for the necessary equipment. Last but not least, however, we are happy to have received public recognition for our work through this prize. In order to guarantee the anonymity of our service in a relatively small city like Freiburg, it is absolutely necessary for our volunteers to tell as few of their acquaintances as possible that they work for the Nightline. It is thus a rare occasion for us to receive recognition for our work from outside, and this makes receiving the prize especially important for us.