

# Middle Earth

## INFORMATION AND APPLICATION FOR HOTLINE AND PEER EDUCATION TRAINING

### Overview:

The Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program was founded in 1970 and was known as CRISIS 5300 and was staffed by a small group of student volunteers. These students created CRISIS 5300 in order to help their fellow students who were challenged by the drug culture and other issues during the 1960's. Today, Middle Earth contains one of the country's oldest student run hotlines. The volunteer staff of 10 students has grown to over 150, and students now receive course credit for their work. In a typical year, the Middle Earth Hotline receives over 1,500 contacts. The program's early focus on drug related issues and education has expanded to also encompass peer support, peer education through peer theater and campus media, and providing information and referral services.

A focus of the program is to train our student staff in peer helping skills. In addition, peer counselors and peer educators receive instruction from professionals from the community about a variety of issues such as eating disorders, sexual assault, alcohol and other drugs, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered issues, disabilities, contraception, HIV/AIDS and other STI's, and multiculturalism.

Middle Earth is the peer assistance arm of the University Counseling Center, Division of Student Success. The program is sponsored and funded by the Student Association and Division of Student Affairs of the University at Albany and is one of the largest student organizations at the University. Middle Earth has also been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and Center for Substance Abuse Prevention as a Model Program in the area of Alcohol and Drug Prevention. Middle Earth consists of three major components: the **Hotline Service**, **Peer Education Service**, and **Staff Development/Training Component**:

- **The Hotline Services** functions as the campus peer assistance agency, especially after hours when other campus support services are closed. Trained student volunteers staff the hotline. A self-help information tape service is also provided. The Hotline is staffed from noon to midnight Monday through Thursday and 24 hours a day on weekends throughout the academic year.
- **The Peer Education Service** has the primary responsibility for the coordination of agency-wide programming efforts, consultation, seasonal preventative theme weeks, and resource development. We also have a peer theater group, the **Middle Earth Players**, and a responsible for a campus newspaper column and radio talk show on our campus radio station. Trained peer educators on campus do presentations, workshops and peer theater performances for sororities, fraternities, athletic teams, residence halls, and other campus groups. Topics include drugs and alcohol, dating and relationships, study skills, eating disorders, sexual concerns, diversity, and other issues.
- **The Staff Development/Training Component** is responsible for ensuring the smooth functioning and continued growth of the Middle Earth organization. As part of our staff development component, we offer several credit-bearing courses through the University. We provide hands-on training for all of our undergraduate members and offer advanced training opportunities for graduate students in programs such as clinical psychology, counseling psychology, and social welfare.

## **General Requirements of Middle Earth Trainees (ECPY 400):**

Middle Earth Trainees may enroll in ECPY 400, a credit-bearing course. **All** trainees are required to:

- Attend a three hour class that meets once a week (traditionally on Tuesday evenings),
- Participate in a training weekend that takes place during one of the first weekends of the semester (Training weekend takes place Friday evening, and during the day on both Saturday and Sunday), and
- **Hotline Trainees:** participate in a three-hour training shift with an experienced hotline counselor on a weekly basis. During this time, trainees learn the logistical tasks associated with working on the hotline and participate in role-plays designed to incorporate information learned in class.
- **Peer Education Trainees:** participate in a weekly laboratory class that provides education on basic communication and workshop presentation theory as well as working with campus media and techniques of peer theater. The lab allows trainees to gain experience in researching, constructing, and presenting peer education programs. Peer education trainees also gain hands-on experience throughout the semester staffing informational tables and exhibits at various sites on campus (often at the Campus Center). This work involves educating peers and providing informative materials, videos and posters, or brochures.

Middle Earth returning students may enroll in the following courses after the training semester: ECPY 403,, 404, 405, 406, and 497. All are credit-bearing courses that involve the following expectations:

### **Requirements of a Hotline Counselor (after the training semester):**

- Participate in a weekly shift on the hotline (3 hours).
- Participate in two (2) 4.5-hour weekend day shifts, and at least one (1) overnight weekend shift during the semester.
- Participate in at least one (1) temporary shift during the beginning and end of the semester.
- Participate in a one-hour weekly supervision group led by one of the Coordinators.
- Participate in agency retreats and in-services as assigned.

### **Requirements of an Outreach Peer Educator (after the training semester):**

- Conduct thirty (30) hours of presentations, exhibits, or other peer education activities during the semester.
- Complete 10 hours of office hours for the semester.
- Participate in a weekly 2-hour supervision/training group led by one of the Coordinators.
- During the semester, research and construct a peer education presentation on a topic jointly determined by the student and supervisor.
- Participate in agency retreats and in-services as assigned.

Gaining experience at Middle Earth is an excellent way to prepare for a career in psychology, medicine, social work, education, communication and a variety of other fields. If you have an interest in helping people and a willingness to learn from your volunteer work, make a commitment and apply to join the Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program. Middle Earth is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes applications from all segments of our diverse campus community.

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS:**

Please print or type and be sure to mark clearly on your application whether you wish to apply to the Hotline, Peer Education, or both components of Middle Earth. Return the application to the Middle Earth Reception Desk or place it in the envelope on the door of Room 202 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Health and Counseling Building. Unless otherwise advertised, the application deadline for spring semester training is **November 15**, and the deadline for fall semester training is **April 15**, unless otherwise announced. You will be contacted later during the semester so that an interview may be arranged.

### **For further information, please contact:**

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[www.albany.edu/counseling\\_center/](http://www.albany.edu/counseling_center/)

**MIDDLE EARTH PEER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO HOTLINE OR PEER EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAM**

Unless otherwise advertised, applications for fall semester training are due no later than April 15, and applications for spring semester training are due no later than November 15 (unless otherwise announced) at Middle Earth, Health and Counseling Building, Second Floor. Please print or type.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
CLASS YEAR \_\_\_\_\_ MAJOR \_\_\_\_\_ G.P.A. \_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT I.D. NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL PHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
LOCAL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
PERMANENT ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

I AM APPLYING FOR      FALL 20 \_\_\_\_\_      SPRING 20 \_\_\_\_\_

CONSIDER MY APPLICATION FOR:  
Hotline only \_\_\_\_\_ Peer Education only \_\_\_\_\_ List preference) \_\_\_\_\_

What do you have to offer Middle Earth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What do you expect Middle Earth to give you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What kind of job and/or life experiences have you had that would help you in your work with Middle Earth? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Briefly describe what constitutes a helping relationship. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of interests and/or involvement do you have other than school? (hobbies, extra-curricular, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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