



Rural North West Peterborough Good Neighbours Scheme

Charity Number

1186197

Guidance Note for Volunteers Working with People and Telephone Befriending.



There are many vulnerable people who are struggling with the loneliness.

Though it may feel strange at first, you can deliver a high quality befriending service and your calls can provide a form of comfort, connection and community.

We hope you find this guide a help in setting up and building your phone relationship. For ease of reference you the volunteer are referred to as the “Befriender” and the person you are chatting to is the “Client”.

Skills for Telephone Befriending.

Delivering telephone befriending can be difficult at first, especially if you are more used to face to face interactions.

Here are some good practice guidelines to help you.

- Try to relax yourself and allow for a calm setting. Cut down on any distractions, both internal and external, like the radio, TV etc. Allow yourself the time and space to focus on the conversation with your client.
- Put the service user at ease and allow them time to get comfortable at the start of the call. Don't be afraid of silences.
- Make sure the call time is appropriate. Ask them if they are ok to talk now or would they like a call back and agree a time for this.

- Respect and care about your client. Listening to them, their stories and their feelings are a privilege.
- Explore the current issues: use open questions, reflecting. Do not interrupt but give them clarification that you are listening by repeating back to them what they've said.
- Allow your client to set the pace and tell the story in their own way.
- Listen carefully, consider what is being said between the lines.
- At intervals, sum up what your client is telling you to ensure you have understood them correctly.
- Ask questions, take an interest in what they are saying.
- Do they have a supply of food and general household supplies like soap and washing powder? Are they eating well? Do they have enough supply of their regular medication? How are they getting these?
- Do they have neighbours or family checking on them?
- How are they feeling regarding isolation and loneliness?
- Are they happy with you continuing to keep in touch with them in this way?
- At the end of each call, make a day and time for the next call.
- Once the call is finished, you may want to make a few notes of your conversation to help you with your next call. Maybe jot down any names they mentioned i.e their sons name, to help you remember.

Structuring the conversation:

USE Open/helpful statements such as:

"Perhaps you can tell me more about that"

"It might be helpful if you could tell me what happened"

DO NOT USE Closed/Unhelpful Questions/statements such as:

"What are you going to do about it"

"You'll be fine, don't worry"

Dos and Don'ts:

Here are a few other things to think about when offering telephone befriending:

- Do recognise your own boundaries and think before you say yes to things. We don't know how long people might need assistance.
- Do remember that the main focus of the relationship is the needs of the other person.
- Don't give out your telephone number or home address.
- Do let them know when you will next be calling them.
- Don't take them to your own home.
- Don't become emotionally over involved.

- At the end of each call, make a day and time for the next call.
- Once the call is finished, you may want to make a few notes of your conversation to help you with your next call. Maybe jot down any names they mentioned i.e their sons name, to help you remember.

Getting Support and Safeguarding Concerns.

If your Client mentions anything to you in a phone call that makes you worried about their safety or someone else's safety, then please contact the schemes co-ordinator.

What if I get sick?

If you yourself fall ill, please inform your coordinator at the first opportunity.

Though we understand you may feel tempted to power through and make phone calls from home while ill, this is not necessary. You must look after yourself. There are procedures in place to accommodate this circumstance:

- The co-ordinator may ask another befriender to take over your phone calls.
- The coordinator may take over the phone calls while you are ill.

Privacy and Confidentiality

It's important to respect the privacy of clients at all times, unless there is a clear safeguarding issue. It is vital that clients trust and respect the Scheme and the Volunteers.

On completion of the task telephone the co-ordinator indicating the task assigned has been completed or by leaving a voicemail.