

COVID-19 guidelines for Volunteers

The current pandemic presents us all with a unique challenge. Society at large is facing a crisis that we did not prepare for and is fraught with many challenges both personal and public. The policy of physical distancing is causing feelings of abject loneliness amongst many elderly citizens exacerbated by the cancelling of all their social clubs and leisure activities. As volunteers you have an opportunity to express caring, concern and to convey the important message that they "are not alone." In addition, your meeting is an occasion to show respect and appreciation for the elderly, curiosity and interest in their personal history and experiences as well as to share your own experiences, outlook and pursuits.

In the meetings (virtual or face-to-face), we propose addressing the following points, using your discretion, sensitively and tailor made for your particular client:

Opening:

My name is _____. I was sent by (whether you are a volunteer or in an official role) on behalf of to ask how you are doing and how I can be of any assistance. This information will be conveyed to who are interested in your well-being and they will keep in touch if needed.

It is important to:

1. Listen, speak clearly and be aware of hearing difficulties.
2. Speak in an interesting and relevant way, be empathetic.

Questions:

General interest: How are you feeling? What is your daily schedule? (Listen to the plan does it include getting out of the house, exercising, remote communication).

Are you familiar with the current government guidelines? (You can pause and explain if necessary).

Who is helping you and who are you in touch with? Family, Neighbors, Cleaning Help, Social Security therapist, support organizations (If needed - ask can you have a contact number?)

Examination of any shortage: food, medicine, important equipment (vision, hearing, walking aids)

Would you like a weekly phone call from a volunteer in addition to your daily contacts? Do you have a relationship with any support organization?

Do you use digital channels for information, communication? If not - Would you like help using your computer, internet, cellphone, etc.?

- ❖ A personal encounter with a person in a stressful situation can trigger questions and considerations for the volunteer. It is important that you have the opportunity to share your feelings and concerns with the relevant professional coordinating the activity.