



# Reach Out / Tele Friend – Just Do It!

## VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

### Tele-Friend Caller Volunteer Responsibilities: As a volunteer, you

- Contact the person assigned to you at no cost,
- Will complete and sign required paperwork,
- Agree to read and follow the guidelines, participant in any training offered by OSDA and sign the confidentiality agreement,
- Will follow the procedures outlined in the guidelines and recognize that not doing so could result in termination of you as a volunteer,
- Are responsible for keeping and submitting any report that may be required, as part of your participation as a volunteer,
- Will keep OSDA informed of any change in your calling schedule due to your illness, vacations or other reason so as to make sure the person expecting a call isn't disappointed,
- Will assist in distributing surveys or information for marketing or satisfaction purposes when convenient and appropriate.

### Qualifications:

1. A volunteer must complete an application.
2. A volunteer must have pleasant phone behavior and conduct themselves appropriately on the phone, on Facebook, chat options, email, or other means of communication that the person you are assigned to and you choose to use.
3. A volunteer agrees to make two calls each week for 15 minutes each.
4. A volunteer should enjoy working with people who live with a disability.

### Calling Assignments:

Each Tele-Friend volunteer will be matched with a person to call based on preferences from the application and initial interviews with the volunteer and the person requesting



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the call. Volunteers may choose to call more than one person. It is up to them, their preferences and schedules.

### **Calling Times/Schedules/Conflicts:**

A volunteer should discuss how often and best times for future calls with the person during the first call and before ending calls that follow. Calling when agreed to is important to the success of this process. If you are not able to make a call due to unexpected illness or conflict, please let the person know as soon as possible. If you decide you plan to stop volunteering, please contact OSDA as soon as possible so a new volunteer can be assigned.

### **Confidentiality:**

As a volunteer Tele-Friend, you will learn certain things about the person you are calling that may be VERY personal and confidential. You must honor that person's privacy with what they share with you, unless it is life-threatening or emergency information. Please respect and support their wishes. Keep private what is shared between the two of you and do not share it with anyone else. **See Emergency or Life-Threatening Procedures.**

### **Emergency or Life-Threatening Procedures:**

If during a phone call or other communication, you believe there is an immediate emergency, tell the person to hang up and call 911. When you hang up, **YOU** call 911 and report the incident yourself and identify yourself as an OSDA Tele-Friend volunteer. Next, call an emergency contact for the person to inform them of the incident. Then, call the emergency number for the County Board of Developmental Disabilities in the county where the person lives. Finally, send an email to [OSDAOhio2017@gmail.com](mailto:OSDAOhio2017@gmail.com) and briefly describe the emergency. **NEVER** give the person any medical advice or financial advice or offer services. This Tele-Friend process is not a referral service, telemedicine provider or medical alert service.



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## Communication with the Person you call:

- Start your first conversation by introducing yourself – say, “Hello, I am your Tele-Friend volunteer. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Practice using a friendly voice tone when calling – this is often the only contact they may have with others on the day you call.
- Be cheerful and interested in them. Ask them things about themselves like, How are you today? What have you been doing so far today? What did you have for breakfast?
- Be flexible and allow time to adjust to the needs of your Tele-Friend. You learned about listening in Project STIR™ training, so now is the time to use your skills. Try to find out about things that you both like. Things that they put on their application form will be helpful. Questions about families, friends and what they like to do during the day are always good choices of conversation.
- Remind them to let you know the best time for the next call or changes to their schedule that would make it necessary for you to change the schedule you have agreed to.
- Make your calls to your Tele-Friend on the day and at the time you agreed to and allow the phone to ring until you get voice mail or an answering machine, so you can leave a message. Try three times during the next 4 to 6 hours. If no answer, call one of the emergency contacts that have been given to you. Let them know that you had a call scheduled and have not been able to reach them.
- Never hesitate to contact the SSA for the person if you have concerns or contact OSDA at (614) 562-1375.

## Referrals/Community Resources:

If the person you are calling asks for a referral for a service or other general information, suggest they call their Service and Support Administrator (SSA) at the County Board of DD in the county where they live or 211 which will direct them to a local information and referral service.