

Tips for Telephone Befriending

There have been a lot of new volunteers and befriending projects during the pandemic. This is fantastic and a great sense of community so thank you for registering your interest with a local organisation. As a new volunteer, you may have never been a befriender before and, with the current situation, may have to befriend over the phone. We hope these top ten tips help you befriend *from a distance*.

1	Length and frequency of call This may be set by your project or may be up to you. Make sure and check! The important thing is to not <i>force</i> the conversation. If it ends ten minutes early, that is better than awkward silence for ten minutes. Do what feels natural.	6	Clueless If you do not know the answer to a question – say you do not know. Do not try and make something up. What you can do is offer to look into it for them and update them on the next befriending call.
2	Before the call Consider in advance what you could talk about. As you become familiar with one another, the conversation will flow easier and this may not be necessary	7	The Good and the Bad We can all have our good days and our bad days. Please do not take it personally if you get them on a bad day. Sometimes people just don't want to talk, and that is okay.
3	During the call Be present. Do not multi-task. Your match deserves your focus and respect. Be conscious of your RSVP: Rhythm, Speed, Volume, Pitch and Tone	8	Talking about the pandemic As the months go on, it is getting harder to be resilient. Make sure your match knows about your local restrictions and guidelines but do what you can to stay positive and leave the topic on a hopeful note.
4	Nearby Keep a pen and paper nearby as you may need to document something such as a safeguarding issue or a request for the time and date of the next phone call	9	Finding common ground Ask them if they watch anything on TV. This can be a great ice breaker. You can follow the story online or start watching the show so you can discuss it together each time while your relationship grows
5	After the call Reflect. Was that a good phone call? Do you think the service user enjoyed it? If improvements could be made – what are they?	10	Repetition If the calls are feeling repetitive, just remember – there is a pandemic. With limitations on travel and socialising, no one has brand new exciting stories to tell, and that is okay!