



# Friends &co™

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**COFFEE TALK SERVICE DETAILS & TRAINING**

# WHAT IS COFFEE TALK?

Coffee Talk is a drop-in phone line that offers older adults an easy and instant way to engage with one of our Coffee Talkers in conversation!

This service is aimed at reducing social isolation and improving the well-being of older adults.

Coffee Talk is completely free and no personal information is needed to participate.

Our Coffee Talkers provide an understanding ear, words of encouragement, and friendly conversation.



## AS A COFFEE TALKER, YOU WILL

- Answer calls from older adults who want a listening ear
- Offer warm conversation, support, and friendship to callers
- Make referrals to other resources and Friends & Co services as needed
- Fill out a standard call report after each call and notify staff if questions or concerns arise





## AS A COFFEE TALKER, YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR

- Giving medical, legal, or professional advice
- Solving every problem
- Talking to belligerent callers
- Giving out your personal information (last name, phone number, address, etc.)

# HOW TO START A CALL

- Welcome the caller and thank them for calling
- Introduce yourself
- Have them introduce themselves
- Start chatting!

Example Dialogue:

**“Good morning and thank you for calling Coffee Talk! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. May I ask your name?”**



## FIRST TIME CALLER

If you haven't spoken to the caller previously, ask if they have called Coffee Talk before. If they are a first-time caller, **let them know that you are glad they called!** Then, there are a few ways you can go about starting the conversation.

*"How did you hear about us?"*

*"Our callers talk about a wide array of topics, including hobbies, books, travels, family, etc. Is there anything in particular you would like to talk about today?"*

*"How has your week been going?"*

*"How are you doing today?"*

*"It is nice to meet you. Would you be comfortable telling me a little bit about yourself?"*

*"Is there anything on your mind that you would like to talk about today?"*



## DURING A CALL

- Listen attentively
- Add a warm welcome to your voice
- Practice patience
- Ask open-ended questions
- Encourage gently
- Express interest
- Share with empathy
- Enjoy a laugh
- Be positive



# ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS



## PAY ATTENTION

- ✓ Put aside physical distractions and distracting thoughts
- ✓ Try to stay focused throughout the conversation



## USE LISTENING SKILLS

- ✓ Allow the caller to lead the conversation and be curious in what they are saying
- ✓ Encourage the speaker to continue with verbal cues like, “yes” or “uh huh”



## PROVIDE FEEDBACK

- ✓ Understand what is being said, reflect, ask questions, and provide feedback if warranted
- ✓ Use phrases like, “What I’m hearing is...” or “Sounds like you are saying...”



## DEFER JUDGEMENT

- ✓ Put aside personal assumptions, judgements, and beliefs when listening
- ✓ Don’t interrupt. Allow the speaker to finish their thoughts before asking questions



## RESPOND APPROPRIATELY

- ✓ Be candid, open, empathetic, and honest in your response
- ✓ Share your opinions respectfully





# CONVERSATION SCENARIOS

SCENARIO	POSSIBLE VOLUNTEER SOLUTION
<b>Repetition</b>	Patience and reframing, inquisitive inquiry.
<b>Complaints</b>	An empathetic, patient ear, and possible redirection.
<b>Despair</b>	Kindness, optimism, and patience. Questions directed toward solution-seeking.
<b>Seeking advice</b>	Instead of advising, encourage them to problem-solve and look at all possibilities.
<b>Silence</b>	Doesn't need to be filled right away! The caller may just need a moment to gather their thoughts. Wait before trying to fill it.



## POTENTIAL SITUATION

## POSSIBLE RESPONSE

Caller is irate, swearing, speaking in derogatory terms regarding race, religion, sexual preference, etc.

- Let them know their language and tone are unacceptable.
- Ask them to stop using that language because you would like to talk with them.
- Redirect the conversation.
- End the call if necessary.

Caller is worried because they are running low on groceries and are not sure how to get to the store or if they will have enough money to pay for things.

- Ask how they have handled this situation in the past.
- Ask if they have any ideas for a solution.
- Using the guide for resources in their geographic area, make appropriate referrals to other organizations.

Caller enjoys your conversation and asks you to call them back later since they have no one else to talk to.

- Coffee Talk is an inbound drop-in phone line only. We currently do not make outgoing calls.
- Share information about the Friends & Co phone companion program.
- Let them know that they can always call Coffee Talk again and remind them of the days/hours of operation.

## AT THE END OF A CALL

Ending a call can be difficult, especially when the caller is super talkative! We usually try to limit the calls to 20 minutes or less to ensure all callers get a chance to talk to someone.

### Here are some tips that may help wrap up conversation:

- Wait for a natural break in the conversation.
- Tell them how much fun you have had talking with them and encourage them to continue to call.
- If they are a new caller, remind them that they can call anytime Coffee Talk operates (Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.).
- If all else fails, explain you need to end the call to allow other callers a chance to talk to someone.



# SUBMITTING A CALL REPORT

After each call, we ask that you submit a call report. These call reports get sent to staff and are a way to keep a pulse on the program and who is calling in.

## **The call report asks for the following information:**

- Volunteer name
- First name of caller
- County they are calling from
- Approximate call length
- If they have called before (If not, how did they hear about us?)
- General nature of the call/topics discussed
- The mood the caller was in at the beginning of the conversation

The call report can be found here: <https://friendsco.org/coffee-talk-volunteer-training/>



# OTHER FRIENDS & CO PROGRAMMING – WHEN TO REFER?

## PHONE COMPANIONS

**Program Details:** We connect older adults with a caring phone companion ready to create and enjoy a connection.

**Service Area:** This service is statewide!

**When to Refer:** We recommend referring the caller if they have called the phone line multiple times and enjoy talking to someone regularly or would prefer to talk to the same Coffee Talker each time.

### **How to Refer:**

- Fill out the form with them (link found on the call report)
- Point them towards the Friends & Co website

## VISITING COMPANIONS

**Program Details:** We connect older adults with a visiting companion ready to create an ongoing connection and friendship in-person.

**Service Area:** Currently, this service is available in the greater metro area. If an individual outside the metro area is interested, they can fill out the form, but it may take longer to find a match for them.

**When to Refer:** We recommend referring the caller if they mention they are looking for a place in their area to socialize or someone to meet in person.

### **How to Refer:**

- Fill out the form with them (link round on the call report)
- Point them towards the Friends & Co website

*If a caller has questions direct them to Emma, Friends & Co's Program & Volunteer Services Director.  
Email: [elucchesi@friendsco.org](mailto:elucchesi@friendsco.org) | Phone: (612) 746-0746*

## RARE SITUATIONS

Coffee Talk is **NOT** a crisis hotline. However, there is a small chance you may run into a situation that you are not comfortable handling alone or that falls outside Coffee Talk's purpose of providing a friendly listening ear.

### **If a caller shares a mental health issue and wants to address it:**

- Explain Coffee Talk is a friendly, drop-in chat not a crisis line, and you are serving as a volunteer, not a trained professional.
- Provide information about other services in the area that may be a better fit for them at this time (See final slide for additional resources).
- Offer to facilitate a 3-way call with them and do a warm transfer to another service.

### **In the case of a potential health crisis indicated by complaints of concerning symptoms:**

- Encourage them to hang up and call 911 or another health professional.
- Offer a 3-way call for them.
- Ask for their address and remain on the line to assist emergency workers.



## THE VONAGE APP

Vonage is a communication platform that makes it possible for you to pick up calls remotely and securely through our call line.

To download the app:

1. Go to the App Store (iOS and iPadOS) or Google Play Store (Android).
2. Download the Vonage Business Communications app. The icon looks like the logo above.
3. Open the app, enter your Vonage business user credentials and then tap "login".



## VONAGE TUTORIAL

Watch our Vonage tutorial video to learn how to sign-in, answer calls, and use the app.

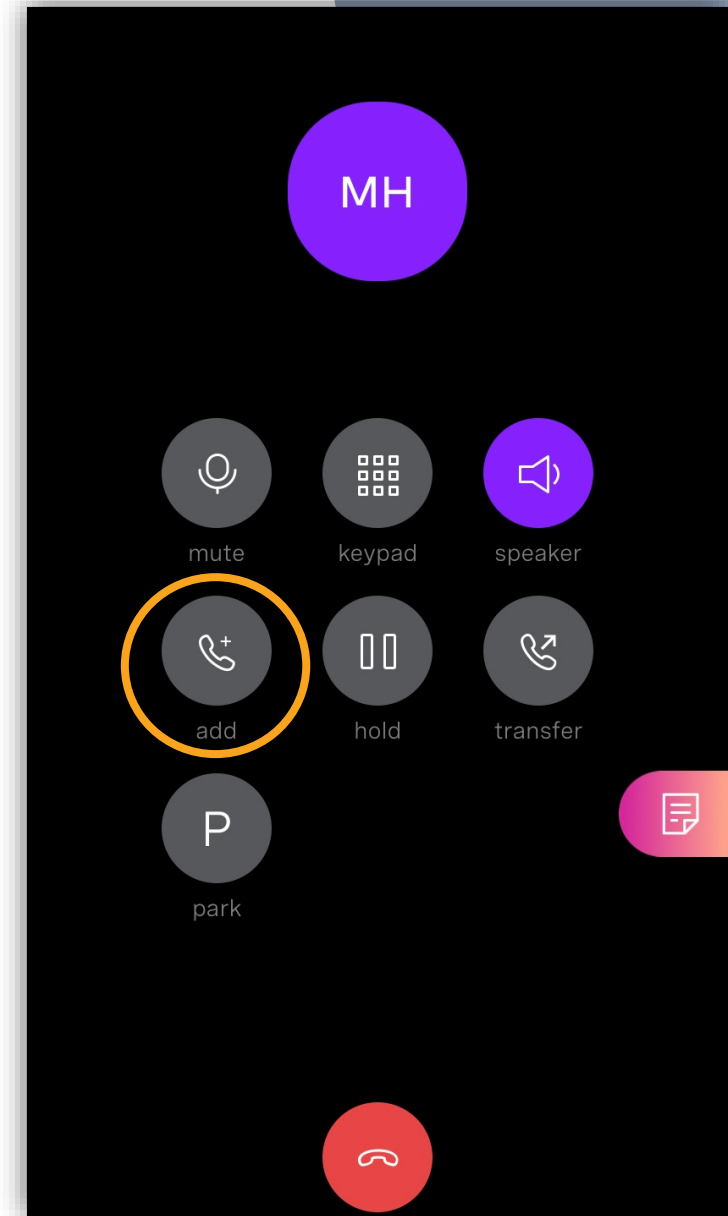
Your username and password will be sent to you via email by staff.



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THIS SHORT VIDEO.](#)

## MAKING A THREE WAY CALL

- If you wish to add a third party while on a call, click the “add button” on your screen while still on the call.
- Type in the number you want to add to your current call.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- National Suicide Hotline: Call 988
- Mental Health Chat Lines:
  - Minnesota Warmline: 877-404-3190
  - HERE4MN: 833-HERE4MN
- Additional Mental Health Resources:
  - [www.mentalhealthmn.org](http://www.mentalhealthmn.org)
  - [www.namimn.org](http://www.namimn.org)
  - [www.fasttrackermn.org](http://www.fasttrackermn.org) (locator for mental health resources)
- For any information for senior related issues or care call the Senior Linkage Line:
  - 1-800-333-2433
  - <https://mn.gov/senior-linkage-line/>
- Friends & Co Resource Guide: [Friends & Co Minnesota Resources Guide](#)



**TOLL-FREE**  
**877-238-2282**  
**OR**  
**612-746-0728**

A drop-in chat line from  
Friends & Co

**THANK YOU FOR  
VOLUNTEERING!**

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**Friends  
&CO™**

*Have additional questions? Contact Emma at [elucchesi@friendsco.org](mailto:elucchesi@friendsco.org) or (612) 746-0746!*