

TelePal

TelePal services are provided by both Up Giving Village's staff and Volunteers and are coordinated with Volunteers by the Volunteer Coordinator at Up Giving Village. There are two different types of TeleCare calls:

1. Telephone Support/Reassurance is designed to be a five-minute (or less) phone call placed every day (or every weekday) at a given time to check on senior adults or adults with disabilities who live alone in order to reassure them and ensure their safety.
2. TelePal Telephone Visits are usually longer telephone calls that take place once or twice a week and are intended to reduce social isolation by connecting the senior adult or adult with disabilities to another person in the community. These may begin as short calls and then become longer as the Volunteer and the Care Receiver get better acquainted, sometimes stretching to 20 minutes or more.

Standards for TeleCare Services

General Guidelines

- When you receive your TelePal assignment from Up Giving Village, it will include the Care Receiver's name, address, and telephone number, and the name and phone number of an emergency contact person.
- We ask that you contact your Care Receiver as soon as possible, introducing yourself as a TelePal Volunteer through Up Giving Village for Volunteer Caregiving. Set up a telephoning schedule with your Care Receiver the first time you contact them.
- We will also let the Care Receiver know to expect a call from you and give them the number of the Volunteer Coordinator at Up Giving Village as their contact person.
- In order to protect your own time, privacy, and degree of involvement, Please do not give the Care Receiver your telephone number. If there is any change in their schedules, Care Receivers are asked to let Up Giving Village know so that staff can contact Volunteers.
- Please do give your Care Receiver and the Services Coordinator at The

Center notice if you plan to be out of town. Ask the Care Receiver if they would like for Up Giving Village to arrange for a substitute caller for the daily reassurance calls.

- If you and your Care Receiver decide that you would like to meet in For a Village Visits, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at Up Giving Village. Care Receivers must receive an in-home assessment before Volunteers can visit their homes.

The Actual Call

- It is understood that you, as the TelePal Volunteer, need to be polite, kind and a good listener. A good way to begin would be to say,

“Hello, Mrs. Jones, this is Susie Smith, your TelePal Volunteer from Up Giving Village for Volunteer Caregiving. I am just calling to see how you are doing today?”

It is important that this be time that you “give” to the Care Receiver and that you do not take this opportunity to give advice or take over the conversation with your own concerns.

- It is very appropriate for you to guide the conversation to a pleasant and positive topic of conversation, especially if the Care Receiver seems to be getting off on a negative track. Just be sure not to dismiss any legitimate concerns that Care Receivers may have about their health or emotional well-being. While you do not want to get caught up in a Care Receiver’s complaints about a family member, physician, home health aide, or other Volunteer, please do not discount what may be a real cry for help or an indication that the Care Receiver may be a victim of mistreatment such as abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Ending the Call

- Please keep in mind the need to respect your individual Care Receiver’s physical endurance/stamina. Remember your purpose, either as daily telephone support or a once-or twice-a-week TelePal Volunteer.

Keep in mind the typical length of such calls: 5 minutes for support/reassurance checks and up to 20 minutes or so for friendly phone visits. Within your time limits, let the Care Receivers be the gauge for the length of the call.

Listen for cues that they may be tiring, especially if it is becoming a longer phone call. If you hear these cues, ask if they would like to end the call, stating that you will be calling again at a given date and time settled on between the two of you.

- Some Care Receivers may want to continue talking beyond the time you have available for the call. If you run into this situation, let them know that you have other obligations/responsibilities and need to end the call. Let them know that you will be calling again at the agreed upon date and time, and end the conversation. Repeat this several times if needed, then let the Care Receiver know that you will be hanging up.

What to Do When You Cannot Reach the Care Receiver

- When you call the Care Receiver for a scheduled reassurance call or phone visit, please let the phone ring at least 10 times prior to hanging up. Many of the Care Receivers walk slowly and may take a while to reach the telephone. If you cannot reach the Care Receiver on the first try, hang up and try again in ten minutes. If after at least 3 unsuccessful attempts made at ten-minute intervals you still have not reached the Care Receiver, call the staff at Up Giving Village for Volunteer Caregiving. It is possible the Care Receiver may have called Up Giving Village to let them know of a change in their situation or schedule. Remember that the Care Receiver will not have your personal telephone number but will have been given the telephone number of Up Giving Village staff as their contact.
- Staff will telephone the emergency contact. This person may have additional information about the Care Receiver's whereabouts or situation. If the emergency contact cannot provide any information or is not available to check on the Care Receiver, then staff will telephone 911 and ask the police or sheriff's department to check on the welfare of the Care Receiver.
- If your scheduled call is during the evening or on a weekend when the office is not open, call 911 and ask the police or sheriff's department to check on the welfare of the Care Receiver. You can leave your number for a

call back if you wish.

- TeleCare Volunteers should not go to the Care Receiver's home if they are not able to reach them. Usually the problem is simply a telephone left off the hook, the Care Receiver stepped outside, forgot the scheduled call, or something else that is easily explainable.
- The emergency procedures outlined above apply only when you are unable to reach the Care Receiver for a scheduled reassurance call or phone visit.

