

Training Worksheets Overview

To help with your understanding and for the best experience, we have provided Training Worksheets that correspond to your MSFriends training sessions. These worksheets provide space for your reflection and notes as well as easy-to-use reference links on each topic. Feel free to utilize these throughout the training and as part of your onboarding conversation with your staff partner at the conclusion of your new peer connection volunteer training cycle.

NOTE: This tool is best used when partnered with the following training videos.

Training Sessions

1. [Welcome to the Society](#)
 - a. Please also listen to this [short session](#) on diversity, equity & inclusion at the Society.
2. [MSFriends](#)
 - a. Pages 3-6 accompany this specific training session.
3. [Challenging Conversations & Crisis Situations](#)

Important Notes:

- All new Peer Connection Volunteers must complete the Welcome to the Society session and the Challenging Conversations & Crisis Situations session.
- Based on your specific peer connection volunteer role, your staff partner will share the appropriate training session link with you for your required role specific training. As an MSFriends volunteer, you must complete the MSFriends specific training.
- This training was created in Summer 2023 and reflects the Fiscal Year 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. We know the information shared in this training will continue to grow and change over time. Continue to visit the [Peer Connections Volunteer webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information, tools and resources to support your volunteer role.
- Accessibility
 - When watching the training sessions via YouTube, be sure to click the CC button in the bottom toolbar to turn on closed captions/subtitles.
 - To slow down or speed up the video, click the Gear icon (⚙️) to adjust the “Playback Speed”.
- Please keep these worksheets for your onboarding call with your staff partner, the Peer Connections Resource Team. We’ll discuss your responses during your peer connection volunteer role onboarding session.

Contact peerconnections@nmss.org with any questions, comments or concerns about the trainings or these worksheets.

Welcome to the Society

In this session, we will cover the Society's vision and mission. Additionally, we will discuss our commitment to diversity equity and inclusion, our cultural values, and the history of the MS Society. As a Peer Connections Volunteer, it's important to understand how your role fits into the different areas of the Society's work.

Reflection:

1. Did you learn anything new or surprising about the National MS Society?

Answer here...

2. What area of work mentioned do you feel most passionate about and why?

Answer here...

Notes:

Resources

- [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at the National MS Society](#)
- [2022-2024 Strategic Plan](#)
- [Peer Connections Volunteer Website](#)
- [Virtual brochure- Welcome to the National MS Society](#)

MSFriends®

Your role as an MSFriends volunteer is part of the Society's network of peer connections opportunities based on the needs of the individual. MSFriends program connects individuals living with MS with trained volunteers for one-on-one peer interactions and connection for up to 6 months.

Reflection:

1. What excites you most about becoming an MSFriends volunteer?

Answer here...

2. What impact do you hope to make in your community as an MSFriends volunteer?

Answer here...

Notes:

Resources:

- [MSFriends Webpage](#)
- [MSFriends Volunteer Job Description](#)
- [Community Disclaimer for Peer Connections Participation](#)
- [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)

MSFriends® Conversations & Active Listening

As an MSFriends volunteer, careful listening is the foundation for each conversation. You'll create space for your MSFriends participants to talk while also providing emotional support, information, resources, and your experiences.

Reflection:

1. What are some things you would talk about with your participant to get the conversation started?

Answer here...

2. What are some things you could do to show your MSFriends participant you are actively listening?

Answer here...

3. What is one way you would gently change the subject if you came across a topic that you are not comfortable talking about?

Answer here...

Notes:

Resources:

- [MSFriends Conversations Quick Guide](#)
- [Educational Resources & Toolkits](#)
- [Active Listening: Tips for Providing a Listening Ear](#)
- [Solution Focused Conversations Guide](#)

Establishing Boundaries & Managing Difficult Conversations

As an MSFriends volunteer, sometimes you might be asked about a topic you are not comfortable covering. Establishing your boundaries early on will go a long way in creating a safe and comfortable space to build trust and rapport within the MSFriends relationship. Sometimes conversations do not go as smoothly as we hope for, preparing for how to manage hard conversations is also a crucial part of this role.

Reflection:

1. What topics are you NOT comfortable talking about?

Answer here...

2. What is one way you would set a boundary if you came across a topic you are not comfortable with?

Answer here...

3. Practicing Solutions Focused Conversations: What if your MSFriends participant says, “My heat sensitivity is so bad that I can’t even go to my nephew’s baseball game.” How could you respond with a solution focused approach?

Answer here...

Notes:

Resources:

- [MSFriends Establishing Boundaries](#)
- [Crisis Support Resources](#)
- [Emotional Support Resources](#)
- [Managing Derogatory, Discriminatory & Racist Statements](#)

Preparing for Your First Call

As you are finishing your training sessions and are being fully onboarded to your new role as an MSFriends® volunteer, there are some things you will need to establish before you have your first conversation with a program participant.

Reflection:

1. How do you want to connect with MSFriends participants (email, phone, video)?

Answer here...

2. What email address will you use? Ensure your email address does not have personally identifiable information to maintain your privacy. You may need to create a new email address. You will need to communicate via email to schedule your first MSFriends phone or video call.

Answer here...

3. What is your schedule or availability for communication?

- a. What is your limit for conversation? If you are feeling drained after your conversation, you may need to shorten the length of your calls.

Answer here...

4. Some MSFriends volunteers use call logs to keep track of their conversations. How will you keep track?

Answer here...

Start Thinking About:

- How will you communicate with your connection if an unexpected schedule change needs to happen?
- What questions will you ask in your first conversation to decide the cadence and schedule of your conversations?

Challenging Conversations & Crisis Situations

As an MSFriends® volunteer, there may be times when you support an individual through a challenging situation or a crisis. We sincerely hope you are never confronted with these types of situations, but your response to them can be a lifeline to someone in need.

Reflection:

1. In your own words, how would you respond to an individual who is using discriminatory or racist statements?

Answer here...

2. After participating in this training & reviewing the Quick Glance Crisis Resource, are there any questions you have about how to support a person in crisis?

Answer here...

3. As an MSFriends volunteer, you will be provided with the ZIP code of individuals you are matched with should you need to connect with their local emergency services. Are there any additional questions you have regarding how to identify and connect to emergency services?

Answer here...

Notes:

Resources:

- [Crisis Support Resources](#)
- [Emotional Support Resources](#)
- [Challenging Conversations & Crisis Support](#)
- [Managing Derogatory, Discriminatory & Racist Statements](#)
- [Quick Glance Crisis Situation Resource for Suicide & Harm](#)

MSFriends® Volunteer Support & Training Wrap Up

As you are supporting individuals in the MS Community as an MS Friends volunteer, we want to make sure you are aware of resources to support **you** within this volunteer role.

- [Peer Connections Volunteer Facebook Group](#)
- Networking Zoom calls
- Monthly News You Can Use newsletter (emailed)
- Quarterly New Peer Connection Volunteer Networking Hours

Reflection:

1. What other resources do you need for your first MSFriends conversation?

Answer here...

2. Do you have any additional questions for us that you'd like to make note of to review during your onboarding conversation?

Answer here...

Next Steps

1. Keep this worksheet handy for your onboarding call. **This call will include discussion about some of the questions in this document.** You will also have a chance to ask anything that was not answered during training.
2. After you watch all training sessions, submit your MSFriends registration by clicking [here](#).
3. Once your MSFriends registration has been submitted, you will receive an email from your staff partner (peerconnections@nmss.org) to schedule your onboarding conversation and to discuss next steps related to MSFriends volunteer activation. You can expect to receive this email within the business week following your registration.