



Peer Connections Volunteer: MSFriends® Volunteer

Overview:

MSFriends volunteers provide connection via helpline or paired relationships through one-on-one conversations over phone, video call, or email. MSFriends volunteers implement and guide peer-led, solution focused emotional support within one-on-one conversations. These volunteers provide empathy, emotional support, and space for confidential conversations.

The National MS Society is committed to embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion in everything we do. We strive to create communities and connection opportunities where everyone feels empowered to bring their authentic selves so we can foster a sense of authenticity and belonging.

Staff Contact:

Peer Connections Resource Team (PeerConnections@nmss.org)

MSFriends Paired Volunteer

Key Responsibilities:

- Serve as a positive representative of and liaison to the Society within the community.
- Provide an authentically safe and inclusive space that aligns with the Society's [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion principles](#), where participants can share their common lived experiences.
- Provide a safe, supportive space for participants to share their feelings.
- Connect over phone, email, or video call on a regular cadence/scheduled time with paired individual.
- Refer individuals to the MS Navigator program or crisis support resources as needed.
- Adherence, at all times, to the Society's [Inclusion Policy](#).
- Communicate regularly with Staff Partner and Peer Connections Resource Team consistently and respectfully.

Education and Support:

- Required MSFriends Volunteer orientation training, including modules focused on: Welcome to the Society, MSFriends: Someone to Listen, and Difficult Situations & Crisis Support.
- Participate in semi-annual MSFriends calls to learn recent best practices, program updates, and action items.
- Utilize resources provided on the [Resources for Peer Connections Volunteer website](#).
- Optional peer support provided through [Connections Volunteers Facebook group](#).

Qualifications:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Have a connection to MS (living with MS, spouse/support partner, parent, sibling or child w/MS).
- Has personal phone to use for making MSFriends calls.
- Has an active email address for communication with Peer Connections Resource Team and paired participants.
- Willingness to maintain a close working relationship with the Peer Connections Resource Team
- Strong listening and communication skills; empathic listener and a desire to help others.
- Compassionate, caring, patient nature
- Knowledgeable about Society resources.
- Ability to empower and motivate participants of the MSFriends program.
- Dedication to the mission of the National MS Society, and a desire to make a difference for those living with MS
- Ability to calmly and effectively manage emergency situations.

Time Commitment

- Uphold meeting cadence as agreed upon with Paired program participant (monthly, bi-weekly, etc.).

- Minimum: 1 hour-long conversation per week
- Communication with MSFriends Paired participants when meeting cadence needs to be updated.

Impact:

- MSFriends empower individuals to address MS-related life changes by providing emotional support.
- MSFriends provide a connection for the National MS Society over the phone.
- MSFriends offer an opportunity for a potentially isolated individuals to build a relationship outside of their normal life circumstances.

MSFriends Helpline Volunteer

Key Responsibilities:

- Serve as a positive representative of and liaison to the Society within the community.
- Provide an authentically safe and inclusive space that aligns with the Society's [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion principles](#), where participants can share their common lived experiences.
- Provide a safe, supportive space for participants to share their feelings.
- Use Society-provided smartphone to access the Avaya system and receive MSFriends calls.
- Volunteer for at least 5 hour-long shifts per week, on average.
- Sign up for shifts using the online TrackSmart scheduling system.
- Refer individuals to the MS Navigator program or crisis support resources as needed.
- Adherence, at all times, to the Society's [Inclusion Policy](#).
- Communicate regularly with Staff Partner and Peer Connections Resource Team consistently and respectfully.

Education and Support:

- Required MSFriends Volunteer orientation training, including modules focused on: Welcome to the Society, MSFriends: Someone to Listen, and Difficult Situations & Crisis Support.
- Participate in semi-annual MSFriends calls to learn recent best practices, program updates, and action items.
- Utilize resources provided on the [Resources for Peer Connections Volunteer website](#).
- Optional peer support provided through [Connections Volunteers Facebook group](#).

Qualifications

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Living with MS
- Knows how to use a smartphone
- Maintain an active email address for communication with Peer Connections Resource Team
- Willingness to maintain a close working relationship with the Peer Connections Resource Team
- Strong listening and communication skills; empathetic listener and a desire to help others.
- Compassionate, caring, patient nature
- Basic knowledge of multiple sclerosis, symptoms and management
- Ability to empower and motivate MSFriends callers.
- Dedication to the mission of the National MS Society and a desire to make a difference for those living with MS.
- Ability to calmly and effectively manage emergency situations.
- Knowledgeable about Society resources

Time Commitment:

- Minimum: 5 hour-long shifts per week

Impact:

- MSFriends empower individuals to address MS-related life changes by providing emotional support.
- MSFriends provide a connection for the National MS Society over the phone.
- MSFriends offer an opportunity for a potentially isolated individuals to build a relationship outside of their normal life circumstances.
- The MSFriends Helpline program supports 1,000+ callers each month.