



## Peer Connections Volunteer: MSFriends®

### Overview:

MSFriends volunteers are supportive, empathetic individuals who provide one-on-one connection and foster solution-focused emotional support through confidential conversations. Volunteers also manage the logistics and timing of their paired connections.

Typical conversations between MSFriends participants and volunteers include:

- Family and social dynamics
- Symptom management, including physical changes, cognition, and mood
- Changes to everyday life
- Adapting to a new normal

Pairs meet for up to 6 months via phone, email or video calls based on the mutual preference of the volunteer and participant.

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](mailto:PeerConnections@nmss.org))

### 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.
- Adhere, at all times, to the Society's [Inclusion Policy](#).
- Communicate regularly with the Peer Connections Resource Team (staff partner) consistently and respectfully.

### Education and Support:

- Required MSFriends Volunteer orientation training, including modules focused on: Welcome to the Society, MSFriends, and Challenging Conversations & Crisis Support.
- Participate in MSFriends training calls hosted by the Peer Connections Resource Team 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 the [Connections Volunteers Facebook group](#).

**Qualifications:**

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Have a connection to MS (living with MS, spouse, support/care 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 (staff partner).
- 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 manage emergency situations calmly and effectively.

**Time Commitment:**

- Uphold meeting cadence as agreed upon with MSFriends program participant. Typically, each paired relationship meets no more than one hour each week for up to 6 months.
- Communication with MSFriends participants when conversation schedule needs to be updated.
- Communication with the Peer Connections Resource Team for additional support.

**Impact:**

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