

Time to Talk Befriending

in the heart of the community

Navigating Difficult Conversations

We all have good days and bad days. Sometimes we do our best to put on a brave face and other days it's much harder. This is true whatever our age or life stage, and your befriender is no exception.

It may also be true that you are the one person in your befriender's life who is calling 'just because', to see how they are, and have the time to really listen to how they are feeling, which could be happy, alright, or honestly, pretty awful.

Even if your call to your befriender might be the highlight of their day - or even their week - you might not always feel this is the case, especially if you feel that your befriender seems stuck in a cycle of negativity or sadness.

Possible Challenges

Generally feeling low, flat or tearful.

Focussing on the negatives.

Missing friends and family, whether they are far away or have died either recently or many years ago.

Experiencing anxiety around specific areas, for example health or finances.

Feeling generalised anxiety, for example watching the news which may seem mostly gloomy or scaremongering.



Possible Responses

Listen, really well. You may be the only person in your befriender's life who calls to ask how they are.

Acknowledge how they are feeling.

Briefly share an example from your own life. In this way you are coming alongside your befriender in their experience.

Pause and take a breath. A moment of silence can indicate you are taking in how your befriender is feeling.

Try humour. Without dismissing a person's experience, humour can help to lighten a mood.

Shorten the call or offer to call another time.

Gently introduce a more hopeful topic. This could be a personal example, or something you have spotted in the news. For more ideas of conversation starters, take a look at our resource of **A-Z of Conversation Starters for Telephone Calls**.

Look after yourself and stay in touch

While you are there for your befriender, remember that we are here for both of you. If things become too much, and you feel that none of your calls are being received well despite your best efforts, please do get in touch to let us know rather than letting the befriending fade away.

Just like friendships, not all befriending works out, and we want to do our best to make sure that you and the scheme member are well supported.

Please do drop a line to volunteers@tttb.org.uk or call the team on 01273 737710 and we'll work out the next steps together.

With thanks to Charlotte for helping us put this together.



Charlotte Evans Story Chaplain
Encouraging everyday creativity and meaningful moments for people living with dementia, carers, and everyone.

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