



Institute on Aging

Helping Bay Area Seniors Live Independently

Friendship Line Telephone Counseling for the Elderly

The Friendship Line is the only nationwide 24-hour toll-free hotline that reaches out to older adults, offering support, reassurance, counseling, crisis intervention, abuse prevention, medication reminders, well-being checks, and information and referral. Volunteers for the Friendship Line receive and make calls, offering an **ongoing connection** for older adults who may be lonely, depressed, mentally ill, bereaved or suicidal.

As a telephone counselor you will talk to older adults, offering support and assistance **by listening, acknowledging, or reassuring**. Sometimes you will help by offering **crisis intervention, elder abuse reporting, or information and referral**. Most importantly you will help by being kind, friendly, nonjudgmental and compassionate.

No experience is necessary. You will receive group and individual training from our caring and experienced staff. Topics included are **counseling skills, crisis intervention, suicide prevention, grief and loss, mental health, and many more aging and ageism issues** that affect the elderly in our society.

After completing the sixteen-hour training, volunteers are asked to commit to a four-hour phone shift per week, at our office on 3330 Geary Blvd (at Parker). A weekly overnight shift, where calls are received from your home or cell phone is also an option.

The Friendship Line is a program of the Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention and Grief Related Services (CESP) at the Institute on Aging.

Please fill out our [Volunteer Application](#) and return to volunteer@ioaging.org or fax to 415-750-4127.

For more information about this and other IOA programs and volunteer opportunities, please contact Susan Lee Lindeman.

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