



Guidelines for a Successful FSC Match

Thank you again for your willingness to donate your time to help a senior in need! Please remember to log your volunteer hours each time you make contact with your client. These hours are very important to MOWSF as we use them for grant and donation funding.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at volunteer@mowsf.org.

The Meals on Wheels San Francisco client base is very diverse, covering a wide range of genders, races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, religions, and political beliefs. Many of our clients are homebound and have little interaction with the outside world, and little may change in their daily lives. Sometimes, contact with Meals on Wheels is the only conversation that your client match has on a regular basis. All of these factors may leave the client with poor conversation and social skills, or a feeling that they don't have anything interesting to say. This does not mean that they don't enjoy speaking with you, however it may need that you need to lead the conversation. Below we have listed some tips, guidelines, and conversation starters to help you have an enjoyable and fulfilling conversation with your client match.

General Guidelines

1. Avoid judgement or assigning your personal values to the client. Try to remember that one person's beliefs and lifestyle are neither right nor wrong, better nor worse, than another's.
2. Questions such as "What's new with you?" usually won't lead to much conversation, as our clients often don't have much change in their lives.
3. Have a few topics prepared that you can share with your match: news headlines, current events, things happening in your life.
4. Share your hobbies and personal stories.
5. We will provide you with as much information regarding the client as we can. Review these notes for ideas on conversation topics or things to avoid.
6. Begin your call by announcing yourself and Meals on Wheels SF.
7. Speak slowly and clearly. Some clients are hard of hearing. Call from an area without background noise or distractions.
8. Try to keep the conversation positive. Clients can sometimes dwell on feeling poorly or lonely.
9. Avoid profanity and inappropriate topics.
10. Clients are generally polite and respectful. Should you encounter a client that uses excessive profanity, is verbally abusive, or makes you uncomfortable in some way please let us know as soon as possible so we can address the behavior and/or set you up with a new match.
11. If the client mentions something that you find concerning (regarding their physical or mental health, their living circumstances, etc.) please let us know. NEVER give medical advice.

12. If at any time the client advises that they are having a medical emergency, have them immediately hang up and dial 911. Contact MOWSF to report what happened so we can note it and follow up.
13. Remember that you are a mandated abuse reporter and must share any concerns that you have.
14. Have fun and remember that you are engaging in a wonderful act of kindness to check on the health and well-being of the clients! Each call gets easier as both you and the client get used to the phone contact and one another's friendship!

Conversation Starters

Career:

1. Did you have a work career? What was your first job?
2. How did you get into that career?
3. Did you enjoy what you did?
4. When did you know that you wanted that career? Do you miss it?

Upbringing:

1. Where did you grow up?
2. Do you have any siblings? Are you close? Who's the oldest/youngest?
3. What was your childhood like?
4. Did you enjoy school? What was it like?

Family:

1. When did you fall in love?
2. When/where did you meet your spouse? What was your first impression?
3. What do you remember about your wedding?
4. What was it like having your first child? What was the hardest thing, and what was the most joyful thing?

Life:

1. What are you most proud of in your life?
2. If you could go back in time, would you change anything?
3. Have your interests changed as you've gotten older?
4. Have your taste buds changed as you've gotten older?
5. Do you have any hobbies? How did you find that hobby?
6. How do you spend your time each day?
7. Do you have any special interests in books, music, movies, theatre, TV?
8. Do you like to travel? What is your favorite trip you've taken?
9. What has been the greatest discovery or invention during your lifetime?
10. What is something that you will never forget?
11. What is something you've learned that you want to pass on?