

Telephone Visiting

Visiting a person by phone is a wonderful way to keep in touch. People who are ill, elderly and /or homebound may find themselves isolated. As a telephone visitor, you can bring hope to someone in need as well as letting the person know that someone cares. The person making the call benefits by performing a *mitzvah* and gaining a sense of satisfaction.

Our goal is to develop friendly, trusting telephone relationships through these ongoing phone visits.

Starting out

- ◆ On the initial call, introduce yourself and explain why you are calling. This introduction should be given at the beginning of each subsequent call until the person gets to know you by name. *If the person has memory problems, start each phone visit with the introduction.*
Example: Hello, this is _____ from Temple Am Echad. I'm calling to say hello and find out how you are doing.
- ◆ Keep short notes of any specific information that you may want to remember and refer to in the future.
Example: Names of children or grandchildren and where they live.
Hobbies or interests
- ◆ Review how often you will be calling. You do not have to set up dates and times but it is a good idea to see what time of day works best for both of you.

At the end of the call

- ◆ Before it is actually time to say goodbye, prepare the person by saying "It's almost time for me to say goodbye for today."
- ◆ Let the person know that you will be calling again.
- ◆ Let the person know how much you enjoyed the telephone visit.

Confidentiality

- ◆ It is always important to remember to protect the person's privacy.
- ◆ There may be times when you feel through tone of voice, statements being made by the person or just a gut feeling that there might be a problem. In this case, it is appropriate to try to obtain more information.

- ◆ Once you have a sense of the problem, let the person know that you are concerned. If you feel that this problem should be followed up, let the individual know that you would like to notify one of the Caring Community co-chairs. If you obtain consent, make the call.
- ◆ There may be times when the person does not want you to follow up. It is important to respect their wishes but if you strongly feel some professional intervention may be needed, notify a co-chair explaining that this is in confidence and that the person did not give permission to discuss the issue.

Information for this handout was taken from Rabbi Isaac N Trainin Bikur Cholim Coordinating Council, a program of JBFC.