

FRIENDSHIP LINE

"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break."

- William Shakespeare

We support individuals who find connecting within the community challenging

NATIONAL - 800.971.0016

Institute on Aging's 24-hour toll-free Friendship Line is the only accredited crisis line in the country for people aged 60 years and older, and adults living with disabilities. We also make on-going outreach calls to lonely older adults. While there are other organizations that respond to the needs of people who may be contemplating suicide, none provides the type of services that IOA's Friendship Line offers to respond to the public health problem of suicide among the elderly. Knowing that older people do not contact traditional suicide prevention centers on a regular basis even if they are considering suicide, we created the only program nationwide that reaches out to lonely, depressed, isolated, frail and/or suicidal older adults. Our trained volunteers specialize in offering a caring ear and having a friendly conversation with depressed older adults.

The Friendship Line is both a crisis intervention hotline and a warmline for non-urgent calls. Founded in 1973 by Dr. Patrick Arbore, Director of IOA's Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention, and accredited by the American Association of Suicidology, Friendship Line provides round-the-clock crisis support services including:

- Active suicide intervention
- Providing emotional support
- Elder abuse prevention and counselling
- Giving well-being checks
- Grief support through assistance and reassurance
- Information and referrals for isolated older adults, and adults living with disabilities

In addition to receiving incoming calls, Friendship Line also offers outreach. We connect with people on a regular basis, and help monitor their physical and mental health concerns. The call-out services act as an intervention to prevent suicide in the long term by improving the quality of life and connectedness of isolated older adults. Any aging adult or living with disabilities who suffers from depression, loneliness, isolation, anxiousness, or may be thinking about death or suicide can benefit from completely confidential phone calls with Friendship Line volunteers. Sometimes the road to happiness begins by simply saying hello to someone who legitimately cares.