



Thank you for volunteering to participate in SAGEConnect! Now more than ever we need to come together as a community, and as loving, caring activists. We appreciate your time and support.

When we have a match for you, we will send you orientation materials and information about ongoing support calls and additional resources.

Callers are expected to speak with their SAGEConnection over the phone for at least 15 minutes once a week. Between calls you may also connect via text message or video chat as appropriate. The purpose of these calls is to help you both feel more connected and less isolated. We recommend keeping questions casual and open ended, such as “How have you been this week?” Avoid asking questions that are overly personal, intrusive, or that may be upsetting.

There are three questions we request that you ask on every call:

1. Have you noticed any changes to your health?
2. Do you have enough food to eat?
3. Do you want me to call you back?

After each call please send SAGE updates by completing this [form](#). If you notice a change in your SAGEConnection’s situation or are concerned for their health and safety, please contact SAGE immediately at [connect@sageusa.org](mailto:connect@sageusa.org). If you try to reach your SAGEConnection two or three times on different days and cannot get them on the phone, please let us know. If you decide to leave a voicemail please do not say you are from SAGE, but instead say that you are from “the Connect” program in case they share an answering machine or voicemail with another person.

### **Ground Rules and Boundaries**

SAGEConnect is a social program, and the reason for your calls is to help everyone feel more connected. This program is strictly social in nature. You are not responsible, nor should you offer to engage in case management, send participants any money, supplies, or gifts, or act as a mental health counselor. If a SAGEConnect participant is in need of assistance, connect them with the national SAGE LGBT Elder Hotline at 877-360-LGBT (5428).

**Both parties have the right to be free from disrespectful, abusive, harmful, or sexual comments, and everyone is expected to use one another’s correct name and pronouns.** If

at any point you feel the conversation has become inappropriate or transgressed these boundaries, it is appropriate to end the call, letting the participant know that you or someone from SAGE will be back in touch soon.

Do not ask participants for their address, full name, banking or other financial information, immigration status, or any other personal details. You should also not share this type of personal information.

### **What if my SAGEConnection is under the influence, confused, or not making sense?**

It is okay to point out that the person you are speaking to is difficult to understand and ask them to repeat themselves or speak more slowly. If it seems like the person is not safe, let them know that you are concerned and you will need to reach out to SAGE staff. If they are not able to engage in conversation because of being under the influence and is not in immediate danger, you can end the conversation and still let SAGE staff know by emailing [connect@sageusa.org](mailto:connect@sageusa.org).

Some people may have mild dementia or other cognitive impairments that result in confusion. Always believe that they are speaking from their reality. It is best to go along with their reality and provide comfort and reassurance, rather than trying to correct or reorient them to shared reality.

Remember your role and boundaries, and contact SAGE if you have concerns.

### **What if my SAGEConnection says something that I find concerning?**

This is a difficult time, and many older people are facing challenges with food and financial security. If your SAGEConnection has questions or concerns about food, utility bills or rent, providing care for a loved one or pet, or other question related to resources and services, suggest that they contact the LGBT Elder Hotline at 877-360-LGBT (5428). The people on this hotline can help direct them to local services.

If the participant tells you that they are feeling sick, especially if they are experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19 such as shortness of breath, a dry cough, fever, or changes in taste and smell, tell them to contact their Primary Care Physician immediately, or call 911.

If the participant tells you or suggests that they are considering hurting themselves or another person, suggest that contact a mental health provider or doctor, or call 911. You are not responsible for crisis response or assessment, but after your call please contact SAGE staff at [connect@sageusa.org](mailto:connect@sageusa.org).

### **Additional Resources**

**LGBT Elder Hotline 877-360-LGBT (5428):** The staff at the hotline are certified in crisis response, offer support without judgment, answer questions factually and confidentially, and can

provide information about community support resources such as healthcare, transportation, counseling, legal services, and emotional support programs.

**Area Agency on Aging:** Staff at your local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) or Department on Aging can assist with connecting your buddy to local resources, such as home-delivered meals or in-home care. You can find your local AAA and other resources at [eldercare.acl.gov/Public/About/Aging\\_Network/AAA.aspx](http://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/About/Aging_Network/AAA.aspx)

**Local Senior Centers:** Local senior centers are closed during social distancing, but most are still operating to provide technical assistance and connect older adults with local services. Most centers can be found through an online search or your local Area Agency on Aging or Department of Aging can provide you with a directory.

**Local LGBT Center:** LGBT centers are another resource for local support. You can find your local center at [lgbtcenters.org/](http://lgbtcenters.org/).

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline:** The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals. <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> or 1-800-273-8255

**NYC Anti-Violence Project:** AVP's 24/7 bilingual (Spanish and English) hotline provides rapid crisis response to LGBTQ & HIV-affected survivors of all forms of violence, including hate violence, elder abuse, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, pick-up violence, and institutional violence in all five boroughs of New York City. You can access AVP's hotline at [www.avp.org](http://www.avp.org) or by calling 212-714-1141.

**SAGE Affiliate Network:** LGBT older people live in every region of our country, from urban neighborhoods to rural counties—and everywhere in between. Find local groups that provide services and programs to LGBT older people through SAGENet, our national affiliate program. Nationally, there are 30 affiliates in 22 states plus Puerto Rico. Find out if there is one near you by visiting this link: [www.sageusa.org/affiliates](http://www.sageusa.org/affiliates).