Facing cancer, with someone who’s been there

Friend for Life
Cancer Support Network

Peer Navigator Manual

A guidebook for Friend for Life Volunteers
Friend for Life Cancer Support Network
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4007 Kresge Way
Louisville, Kentucky 40207-4604
Mission and Welcome

Our Mission:
To help persons recently diagnosed with cancer and their loved ones navigate the path through diagnosis, treatment and recovery by pairing them with a trained survivor of a similar experience so they can face cancer with someone who’s been there.

Welcome and thank you
Without you and others like you, there would be no Friend for Life Cancer Support Network. Our Volunteers are the heart and soul of the organization.

This manual is dedicated to

Joan Steiner
Friend for Life’s first Director
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission and Welcome</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who We Are and What We Do</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Are Your Values?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend for Life Core Values</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Navigator Do’s</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Navigator Don’ts</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ways to Support Friend for Life</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Staff</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our History

Friend for Life was founded in Louisville, Kentucky in 1988 as a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 organization.

The Initial Match
The first match for Friend for Life was the pairing of co-founders Phil Bramlette and Chuck Sandmann. “Through conversations and discussions of ‘what ifs,’ Phil developed a vision for what could be and should be for patients facing the diagnosis of cancer. He felt that if enough like-minded individuals were to develop a program of support for patients that was based on personal experience, it would offer hope and encouragement to the patient undergoing therapy. I was blessed to have the acquaintance of such a like-minded person (Chuck) and introduced these gentlemen in the stately environs of a Hardees restaurant. One must understand that these connections were made before the convenience of such things as cell phones and email. Phil and Chuck networked and followed multiple leads to talk to people all over the US that had formed similar groups. They put all the pieces together and that resulted in the organization we now know as FFL. This group was built on the faith of ‘if you build it, they will come’ and 20 years later, they are still coming.”

- Judy Hubbs Sisk, RN, OCN, at FFL’s 20th anniversary celebration, 2008

Friend for Life co-founders Phil Bramlette (l) and Chuck Sandmann
Who We Are and What We Do

Who We Are

Our Volunteers

Our Volunteers are the heart and soul of Friend for Life and include Peer Navigators, Board Members, and Supporters. Anyone with an interest in supporting our mission is welcome to volunteer with FFL.

What We Do

Friend for Life matches persons recently diagnosed with any form of cancer with a Peer Navigator who has experienced the same form of cancer and/or course of treatment. Understanding that cancer affects the family, friends and co-workers, support is also available for these supporters.

What is a Peer Navigator?

A Peer Navigator is a cancer survivor or caregiver trained by healthcare professionals to assist others with the initial emotional, psychological and practical uncertainties posed by a cancer diagnosis. Peer Navigators do not advise or participate in medical decisions, but serve as sounding boards to help the patient or caregiver sort through the roller-coaster of thoughts and feelings that are so common.
What are Your Values?

By ranking the following values, you will get a clearer picture of what you value most.

Below, you will find a list of 12 values arranged in alphabetical order.

Study the list carefully, then place a 1 next to the value that is most important to you, a 2 next to the value that is second most important, and on until you have numbered all 12 values.

When you have finished ranking all of the values, go back and check over your list. Take all the time you need to think about this so that the end result is a true representation of your values.

___ Beauty (beauty of nature, of the arts)
___ Comfort—a pleasurable, successful life
___ Equality (equal opportunity for all)
___ Freedom (independence, freedom of choice)
___ Friendship (close relationships with others)
___ National defense (protection from attack)
___ Peace—a world free of conflict
___ Personal security (safe, free from worry)
___ Respect (treated well, admired by others)
___ Salvation (saved, eternal life)
___ Self-fulfillment (development of self-potential)
___ Wisdom (mature understanding of life)
At any time, if you have concerns or just want to talk things over with staff, please call us.

502.893.0643 or 866.374.3634
Friend for Life Core Values

- **Listening**: Central to the role of a Peer Navigator is to actively *listen* to the person you are supporting.

- **Respect**: The person you are supporting may make decisions that are different from ones you would make. Your role is to listen without judging or criticizing.

- **Compassion**: Have empathy for the person you are supporting.

- **Self-care**: Take care of you. This may mean telling FFL staff that you are unable to take on a new contact at a particular time, or that you need support yourself. Contact the staff – that’s what we’re here for.

- **Openness and Acceptance**: We can always learn from others. It doesn’t mean we need to change our own beliefs; just be open to the person you are supporting and accept them as they are.

- **Collaboration**: Friend for Life collaborates with many other organizations. We encourage you to seek out and participate in community, regional and national resources that interest you.

- **Confidentiality**: What you and your referral talk about stays between the two of you. There are two exceptions: if you feel your referral is at risk for harming him/herself or another person. If this is the case, please contact your local Crisis Center or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800.273.8255, and let FFL staff know. At any time, if you have concerns or just want to talk things over with staff, please call us: 502.893.0643.

- **Ongoing Learning**: The world of cancer care is constantly changing. FFL will provide opportunities for continuing education from time to time. We encourage you to participate in these and pursue more that interest you.
Peer Navigator Do’s

Contact your Referral as soon as possible...

...preferably within 24 hours of accepting your assignment. As you know, cancer is not a 9 to 5, weekday experience. If it will be a day or two before you will have time for a good conversation, please contact your Referral to determine when both of you will have time, without distractions, to talk.

Be yourself.

You won’t have all the answers and are not a wizard. Your Referral is looking for another human being who has gone through the experience they are facing. Be honest, but be upbeat and encouraging.

When you call your Referral, ask if it is a good time for them to talk.

Follow up.

Please follow up with your Referral on a regular basis. The feedback we receive from Referrals is that they want their PN to follow up with them. Use whatever strategy works for you, to remind you to call, e-mail or write.

Learn to be comfortable with silence.

This will give your Referral time to reflect and process their thoughts.
Peer Navigator Don’ts

Please do not:

- give medical advice of any kind
- give un-asked for advice
- talk more than you listen
- give money or gifts to your Referral
- make promises you cannot keep
- talk about your Referral with others
- criticize doctors, physicians, medical institutions or other health care professionals to your Referral
Frequently Asked Questions

How long does it take to be matched with a Peer Navigator?
We try to complete a match as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours. If staff knows that this process will take longer, we will let the caller know this and when to expect to hear from a PN.

What if Friend for Life does not have a satisfactory match for a caller?
In the event that we do not, we contact other peer support networks to find a good match. We also assist the caller in accessing other resources appropriate to their needs.

What's the best way to contact my Referral?
If the two of you live far apart, communication will usually take place by telephone, e-mail or Skype. If they live in the same area, you may want to meet for coffee. We leave this decision up to you and your Referral to determine what works best for you.

How often do I contact my Referral?
Please keep in touch weekly or bi-weekly with your Referral throughout treatment, unless they request otherwise. Some may need more frequent contact; some may want less. Ask your Referral what would she or he would prefer. Most PNs share their contact information with their Referral, but it is not required.

Does FFL evaluate the effectiveness of this peer support service?
Yes. Currently, staff send brief feedback surveys both to Referrals and to Peer Navigators in online and print versions. Results are used to guide topics to emphasize in Peer Navigator training and support.

Does Friend for Life provide support to a limited area?
No. If we have a good match, it does not matter if the two live in the same town, across the country, or even live in another country.
FAQ, continued

What if a Referral or PN cannot afford to make long-distance calls?
Friend for Life will reimburse the cost of long-distance charges between PNs and Referrals up to a point. Fortunately, many PNs have unlimited long-distance on their mobile phones and are willing to use that to support their Referrals and the organization.

What if the match between the PN and Referral is not working out?
Either the PN or Referral are encouraged to contact the FFL office. Staff will work to find the most satisfactory solution to the situation.

I forgot to call my Referral for awhile and feel awful. What should I do?
You are human. Humans forget, make mistakes, say the wrong thing. The great thing is, humans can say “I’m so sorry. I should have called you (a week/month/whatever) ago. I hope you can forgive me.” Most likely they will appreciate your honesty and human-ness. If you feel unable to bring yourself to contact your Referral, please let FFL staff know. We will help to smooth things over with your Referral.

My Referral is seeing a doctor I do not like. What do I say?
We know this can be difficult, but please say nothing. The most you might say, if your Referral on their own expresses dissatisfaction with their medical care, is to ask if they have considered getting a second opinion. Please do not disparage any medical practitioner or give medical advice.

How do they get a second opinion?
Insurance providers will provide a list of physicians within their network. Also, most hospitals/cancer treatment centers have physician referral services.
FAQ, continued

What if I cannot continue to provide support to my Referral?
We understand that life does not always go as planned. Please let staff
know if you are unable to continue your support of your Referral for any
reason. We will find a new match for them.

What ages does Friend for Life serve?
FFL primarily serves adults diagnosed with cancer. However, we have
several PNs who were diagnosed with cancer in their teens and are
available to provide support to teens diagnosed with the cancers they
have had.

How is Friend for Life funded?
Friend for Life receives funds through a variety of ways, including grants,
individual donations, corporate sponsorships, fundraising events and
additional opportunities (see page 19) where you can participate and
benefit the organization with no additional cost to you.
Other Ways to Support FFL...at No Extra Cost to You

You can raise money for Friend for Life Cancer Support Network through simple, everyday actions that can actually save you money.

Available from the Friend for Life office (call us 502.893.0643)

- Friend for Life Kroger Gift Card
- Friend for Life Thornton's Card
- Friend for Life Capitol One Card

Online Tools and Services—be sure to choose Friend for Life Cancer Support Network as your charity when you sign up!

- GoodDining: [http://www.gooddining.com/howitworks.htm](http://www.gooddining.com/howitworks.htm)
- We-Care: [http://www.we-care.com/](http://www.we-care.com/)

SendOutCards

Friend for Life uses SendOutCards (SOC) to help staff stay in touch in a more personal way with our volunteers. When SOC reminds us when that a volunteer’s birthday is coming up, we go online to choose, personalize and send a high quality card to arrive on the volunteer’s birthday.

You can also use SendOutCards to stay in touch with family and friends, clients or employees. If you sign up through Friend for Life, the organization will receive approximately 30 percent of what you spend with SOC.

Try out SOC on us by sending your own personalized card for free from this page: [www.sendoutcards.com/104238](http://www.sendoutcards.com/104238) which takes you to our site.
Our Staff

Executive Director Judy Kasey Houlette holds a MA with a double major in Community Counseling and Applied Gerontology from Ball State University. A breast cancer survivor, Judy also received training in psychosocial oncology as part of her degree program. Judy has been a member of CARRA (Consumer Advocates in Cancer Research and Related Activities) since 2005, and has served as a human subjects advocate and reviewer for various programs sponsored by the National Cancer Institute since 2004. Judy is on Advisory Committees for NCCCP at Norton Cancer Institute and the Lung Cancer Alliance of Kentucky and Southern Indiana. She is also a member of the Network Cancer Committee of Norton Cancer Care and served as a member of the Institutional Review Board at Baptist Hospital East from 2000 to 2003. Her life is deeply enriched by the cancer survivors and co-survivors with whom she works daily.

Assistant Director Nicole Guffey Wiseman received a Masters in Public Administration with concentration on Non-Profit Management from the University of Louisville. In addition to her position at FFL, Nicole serves as a PRN crisis phone counselor at Seven Counties Services. She has also worked and volunteered with several local non-profits including ALSAC/St. Jude Children’s Hospital, St. Joseph Children’s Home, Dress for Success, Kosair Children’s Hospital, the American Cancer Society, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.