



Project: Let's chat



Project Aim: The project aims to address and actively engage the relatively high number of people experiencing social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the associated mental health concerns such as loneliness and anxiety occurring within our local community.

The secondary aim of the project is the desire to establish long term relationships with members of the local community, facilitating the development of evangelistic discipling relationships which share the journey with these community members addressing their spiritual needs.

Rationale: **Ministry opportunity for self-isolating saints:**
The Southlakes Anglican congregation has a reputation of being very friendly and welcoming within the community. However, there is a growing number of saints who are self-isolating, and unable to attend worship services. These saints would love to be involved, even if it is from within the confines of their home.

Connecting with isolated community residents:
The telephone remains a safe vehicle through which to establish and maintain relationships, even if a period of lockdown should resurface. Accordingly, connecting with community residents who are feeling alone and disconnected is a priority.

Project Scope: **Project: Let's Chat** is designed to primarily be a telephone ministry. However, "letterbox visits" may be incorporated, (at the discretion of the Let's Chat Team Member) with all necessary safety precautions adhered to. At all times Governmental and Diocesan restrictions will be followed.



Structure and Procedure:

Project: Let's Chat will be guided by the following structure and procedures.

1. Project Invitation

The following advertisement will be placed on Facebook inviting local members to either register for a weekly "Let's Chat" phone call or refer their loved one for a call.

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**Would you like to receive a friendly call once a week?
Do you have a loved one who is feeling lonely or isolated?**

We have a team of friendly members of the Southlakes Anglican Community who would be happy to call you or your loved one on a weekly basis, just to see how you are going. We've called it "Project: Let's Chat". To receive a call, please call the church office on (02) 4973 1204.

Team Members may choose to use a "Hello Card" as an alternative avenue for contact.

2. Initial Inquiry and registration of Isolated Resident (IR)

- Self Registration - A person may respond to the invitation and register themselves to receive a weekly telephone call.
- Referred Registration – A person may register their loved one to receive a weekly telephone call.

The name and telephone call is noted by the Church Office and passed to the Let's Chat Coordinator.

3. The Let's Chat Co-ordinator

A designated member of the Southlakes Anglican community is appointed as the Let's Chat Co-ordinator. The co-ordinator's responsibility is to make the initial call to the Isolated Resident (IR), clarify the need and context, and allocate the IR to a Let's Chat Team Member.

- Let's Chat: Getting to Know Form – The Co-ordinator completes the "Getting to Know" Form prior to allocating the IR to a team member.
- The Co-ordinator maintains a register of all Isolated Residents involved in the project.
- The Co-ordinator maintains contact with each Let's Chat team members to ensure they are maintaining their weekly calls.
- If a Team Member reports to the Co-ordinator they have been unable to gain contact with a IR person for more than two weeks, the Co-ordinator will inform the Rector.
- The Co-ordinator is responsible to regularly remind Team Members to ensure they maintain appropriate emotional boundaries with their allocated IR and are utilising their "Reflective Listening Skills" (see "Things to Remember") in each call.
- The Co-ordinator keeps the Rector informed as to the progress of the ministry and any specific ministerial needs that may arise.



Getting to know: _____

Name of Isolated Resident requiring call: _____ Self registered Referred

_____ Telephone: _____

If the person has been referred:

Name of referee: _____ Telephone: _____

Relationship to the Isolated Resident:

Son / daughter Relative Friend Neighbour other: _____

Have they advised their loved one that they have registered them with Project: Let's Chat?

Self-registered Referred

Risks and Health Concerns:

Is this person isolated due to health concerns or risk to personal health? Yes No

Is this person in isolation due to having been recently being tested for COVID? Yes No

Is this person already being looked after by other home care organisations? Yes No

If yes name of organisation: _____ Ph: _____

Best time to call:

Is this person happy to receive a telephone call on a weekly basis? Yes No

What day and time is best for the phone call to take place?

<input type="checkbox"/>								
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
<input type="checkbox"/>								
AM	PM	EV	AM	PM	EV	AM	PM	EV

Note: _____

This person has been allocated to:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

The Let's Chat Team member has confirmed their commitment to regularly contact this person.

Confirmed on _____



4. Let's Chat Team Member: What do I say?

Once a team member receives the name and number of an Isolated Resident, the following dialogue is suggested.



Hi there, my name is _____.
I am a member of Southlakes Anglican Church in Morisset.

If self referred:

I'm calling because you indicated that you would like someone to give you a call on a weekly basis to see how you're going. Is that right?

Would you like me to tell you a bit about myself?

If referred by someone else:

Your loved one _____, thought you may appreciate receiving a telephone call on a weekly basis, just to see how you are going. Is that right?

Before ending the conversation, try to establish a regular time for your call:

Is there a particular day or time for me to call each week that is best? Or is anytime OK?

<input type="checkbox"/>						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>						
AM PM EV						

If they say "anytime", it is important that you indicate what day and time you are able to call them on a consistent basis.

Things to remember:

- ✓ Try to commit to pray for your Isolated People every day. Your prayer does not need to be long. However, God works through our faithful prays.
- ✓ Your primary role is to be a friendly source of hope, encouragement. In the initial weeks, make it a priority to establish a connection. This will involve listening, listening and more listening.
- ✓ Do not fall into the trap of feeling as though you need to fix their problems, or try to coax them into a positive frame of mind. Instead, practice active and reflective listening. It may be many weeks before you are able to share where you have found hope and encouragement in the past – but, if they ask, feel free to share your faith.
- ✓ What we're trying to do is make people feel comfortable, like they've been heard and like they can trust us at some level – and trust is built incrementally, step by step, by us just listening.
- ✓ Try to ensure your phone calls do not extend too long. A recommended timeframe is about 20 minutes. Obviously, calls may be much shorter. However, ensuring the call does not become lengthy helps your ministry be sustainable and not become too burdensome.



Please ensure you read and become skilled at Active and Reflective Listening. This type of listening will be the backbone of all conversations.

Active and Reflective Listening:

Learning to attend fully to another person, successfully understanding and reflecting how the world appears to them, without making judgements or pushing for change, is a real skill that requires considerable practice.

Good listening and appropriate responding are more difficult and demanding than they appear. When other people express negative feelings or are upset, we tend to search immediately for our own solutions to their problems, or we try to reduce or deny the intensity of the feelings expressed. It takes genuine respect, and a belief in each person's inner resources, individuality, separateness and personal worth, to refrain from trying to rescue or blame, and to create an environment that enables them to explore their own solutions.

In a reflective listening response, the listener communicates understanding and acceptance by paraphrasing, or restating in their own words, what the other person has expressed. This helps the listener put their own agenda aside and focus on what the other person means, and it lets the speaker know how they have been understood.

A good reflective response, which paraphrases both facts and feelings succinctly, lies at the heart of active/reflective listening. We already paraphrase quite naturally in some situations. We repeat the meaning of an instruction, a direction or other factual information to make sure we have understood it correctly. For example, 'So you'll leave after lunch, which means you'll be home in time for dinner.' With practice, paraphrasing feelings can also become quite natural.

Paraphrasing does not mean 'parroting'. Sometimes, when people start to learn reflective listening, they mistakenly repeat the speaker's message in exactly the same words. This sounds phoney and inane and is very irritating. While it may indicate that the words have been accurately heard, it does not convey an intelligent comprehension of their meaning.

We sometimes find it difficult to identify and respond to feelings, perhaps because we don't have the words to describe them. Perhaps, too, we have difficulty accepting them. But feelings are a valid component of our individual experience, and when they are out in the open and accepted, they are easier to manage, more amenable to change and less likely to cause ongoing trouble.

Being on the receiving end of good reflective listening helps us clarify our feelings, discover new ways of looking at ourselves and our situations, and to decide on appropriate action. Listening well to others does the same for them.

Sometimes a paraphrase might miss the mark, but this usually isn't a disaster, particularly if a good relationship has already been established. The speaker will often say, 'No, it's not like that, it's more that ...' Misunderstandings will be corrected quickly, before they compound, and the conversation will usually flow on with an enhanced sense of connectedness.

Alternatively, people may actually feel 'not understood'. They may show this with puzzled looks, irritation, by changing the topic, becoming more factual, more superficial, or by abruptly ending



the conversation. If you find this happens often, you might need to check whether you are really using reflective listening, or doing something else. If you don't get the hang of it straight away, don't despair. Most people have to practise it for a while. It's worth the effort, and will improve your relationships.

When learning to make a reflective listening response, it can be useful to have some sentence structures to help people get started.

Here are some suggested starters.

'You feel...'
'It seems to you that ...'
'It sounds as though ...'
'In your experience ...'
'You mean ...'
'From where you stand ...'
'You feel ... because ...'
'When ... you feel...'
'Let me see if I understand; you feel ...'
'Your main concern seems to be that ...

5.The Letterbox Visit



While **Project: Let's Chat** is predominately a telephone ministry, after a certain time period it is likely a warm relationship may have developed – during which the Isolated Resident may suggest you drop in to visit them.

Due to the increased health concerns surrounding COVID-19 each team member must make their own decision as to risks involved in visiting their new friend.

If team members are concerned for their own health, they may wish to advise that a visit is not possible, or they may organise someone from the church to drop off a gift, or visit them in your place.

To alleviate any health concerns, when making a letterbox visit, please ensure you maintain social distancing of 1.5 metres, and it is highly recommended that you wear a mask during your letterbox visit.

Please keep in mind, this is a "**Letterbox Visit**". This means that the visit takes place outside, in the fresh air, at the letterbox.

Team members are advised against entering into the home of the Isolated Resident. This is not just for your safety, but also for the safety of the resident.

If you would like to give a small gift to your Isolated Resident, you may do so. If you need a gift the church office has a range of small gifts which may be used.

6.The Letterbox Invitation

Project: Let's Chat team members may decide to use the following Hello! Card, which may be left in letterboxes along their street. The Hello! Card can be altered by team members at their request.



HELLO! If you are self-isolating
I would love to help.

My name is _____

I live in the area and am also a member of
SOUTHLAKES ANGLICAN CHURCH

**If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19,
I can help you (for free, of course!) by:**

- Dropping in to check how you are Delivering urgent supplies
 Posting/collecting mail Being a listening ear over the phone
 Other: _____

**Contact me at _____
and I'll do my very best to be able to help you.**

*(For the sake of each other's health, we'll need to wash our hands regularly,
stay 2m away from each other and leave items to be collected/dropped
off on your doorstep or letterbox).*



We are a friendly church in Morisset,
blessing the entire Southlakes region
with the good news of Jesus Christ.

_____ church@southlakes.org.au
southlakes.org.au facebook.com/southlakesanglican

7. Concluding thoughts

Remember, the overall aim of the project is to help people in the community feel valued and loved. It may be many months before you see the relationship grow. However, the Lord Jesus uses every effort we make to love and care for people.

If you have further questions regarding Project: Let's Chat, please call RevMel on 0439 529 045.