

shelter from the rain

COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR SINGLE MOTHERS

www.shelterfromtherain.com



CARE CALLS

Maintaining positive relationships with our single parents is top priority for Shelter From the Rain. Through “Care Calls” we are able to keep in touch and help our parents better. The following guidelines will be used while conducting calls.

1. Always identify yourself at the beginning of all calls.

Example: “Hello, my name is John Doe from Shelter From the Rain. May I please speak with Ms. Jane Smith?”

2. Be sensitive to the tone of your voice.

Do not sound overly anxious, aggressive or pushy. It is important your tone conveys compassion and understanding. **Tip:** Sit up in your chair or stand during the conversation.

3. Think through exactly what you plan to say and discuss BEFORE you place a call.

Tip: Jot down the items you want to discuss and questions you want answered. In other words, anticipate and expect you will be placed into a voicemail system; plan your message to be as direct and specific as possible, asking the person to respond to specific alternatives or questions. Do not say, “Hello, it’s Syndi, call me back.” At least state the subject about which you want the person to call you back about.

4. Do not allow interruptions to occur during conversations.

Do not carry on side conversations with other people around you. The person on the telephone takes precedence over someone who happens to pass by while you are on the phone. **Tip:** If you must interrupt the conversation, say to the person, “Please excuse me for a moment I’ll be right back” or “Do you mind waiting?” And when you return, say, “Thank you for holding.”

5. Especially when leaving messages, speak clearly and slowly. Do not use broken phrases, slang or idioms. Always, always leave your return telephone number as part of your message, including the area code . . . and S-L-O-W-L-Y, including REPEATING your telephone number at the end of your message.

6. Do not allow yourself to be distracted by other activities while speaking on the telephone, such as rustling papers, chewing and eating, working on the computer, or speaking with someone else. Most importantly, do not use a hand held cell phone while driving. **Tip:** Always treat every caller with the utmost courtesy and respect by giving him/her your undivided attention.

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7. Try to find the best time to call.

To avoid playing telephone tag, try the following: When calling someone, establish specific call-back times. Ask, "When is the best time for me to call again?" or "When is the best time for them to call me back?"

8. Close the conversation with a follow-up action.

Many times people find it difficult to end a telephone conversation. There are some specific things that you can say to close your conversation professionally:

- ▶ Talk in the past tense and use "closing" phrases (i.e., "I'm really glad we were able to speak today.")
- ▶ State the action you will take.
- ▶ Spell out follow-up action, including time frames/deadlines.

9. Proper telephone language is critical.

Although we tell our callers a lot through our voice tone, the words and phrases we use convey a message. Unfortunately, sometimes we send a negative message to our caller. Be aware of the language you are using.

- ▶ Instead of saying "You have to...You need to...Why didn't you?" try "Will you please...Would you please?"
- ▶ "Your problem" or "Your complaint," would sound better phrased as "Your question," "Your concern," or "this situation."
- ▶ Many people use phrases like "I can't do that" or "it's not my job." Instead, tell the caller what you can do (i.e., "While I'm not able to establish change on this matter, I will speak to our team about your concern.")

▶ At all costs, avoid sounding abrupt. The following are examples:

- "Hang on."
- "Hold on."
- "Who's calling?"
- "I can't hear you, speak up!"
- "I can't help you. You'll have to speak to someone else."

▶ The following would be more appropriate:

- "May I put you on hold?"
- "May I say who is calling please?"
- "I am having a little difficulty hearing you. Can you please speak up?"

10. Closing a conversation

Telephone techniques are built from a few basic rules and principles. In fact, telephone etiquette can be summarized in one word: COURTESY. Unfortunately, courtesy is not something people are used to being shown routinely. It is our goal to maintain positive relationships with each parent in order to help them reach goals and provide for their children.

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TYPES OF CALLS

1. Introduction

This call is to:

- Introduce them to Shelter From the Rain, thank them for contacting us and ask them if this is a good time to speak.
- Inform the parent that their application was received.
- Ask them how they heard about us.
- Get additional needed information (clothing sizes, correct address, types of jobs needed or anything not included on the original application).
- Tell them about what services we offer and refer them to our “Resources” page on www.shelterfromtherain.com for services that we DO NOT currently provide.
- Tell them that we operate inside of Savannah Church of God located at 3033 Martin Luther King Blvd., Savannah, Georgia 31405.
- Ask them if they know where that is located.
- Tell them that the Secretary is Ms. Ruth and this is where all donation items can be picked up Monday – Friday between the hours of 9 AM and 3 PM. Please call to let the secretary know that you are on the way at: 912-232-1212.
- Ask them if they communicate better through text, phone or email
- We will send notification when various items are ready for pick-up
- If they are in need of a job, please ask them if they have an up-to-date resume. If they do not have a resume, please ask them to send and email to info@shelterfromtherain.com requesting help with their resume needs.
- Please remind them that we have a large number of mothers to serve, so their request, based on the item may take some time. Baby supplies, household items and food typically are the fastest. Clothing may vary due to sizes available.
- Please end the call by thanking them for contacting us and reassuring them that we are working on meeting their needs as soon as possible despite the larger number of requests from single parents.

2. Follow-Up Call

This call is to:

- Inform the parent that we are making “Care Calls” to check on all our parents
- Ask them if these calls are alright or if they do not want to receive calls
- Check on the parent
- Update any information on file (address, job status, etc.)
- See if they still need assistance
- Inform and update them on upcoming events (if any)
- Remind them that we are still praying for them and here to help in any way possible
- Submit Form with Info: <http://www.shelterfromtherain.com/care-calls>

If the parent is not available, please leave a message that this was just a Care Call from Shelter From the Rain and we will try them again at another time. If they would like to

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return our call, please tell them to contact Jennifer at: 912-232-5860.