

**National Sisterhood of Presvyteres
The Listening Connection
Policy and Guidelines**

The Listening Connection (TLC) is designed for fellowship and outreach only. Listeners cannot diagnose, advise, counsel, or provide treatment of any kind. Callers seeking counseling or medical advice or who have specific clinical questions should contact a licensed professional. Listeners are independent volunteers and are not employed agents or representatives of the National Sisterhood of Presvyteres (NSP) nor are any affiliated organizations responsible for any acts or omissions of volunteer listeners.

1. PURPOSE OF THE LISTENING CONNECTION

TLC is intended to assist the NSP in carrying out its mission:

- To promote the spirit of Christian love among the Presvyteres of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; and
- To get acquainted with one another and to develop a genuine interest in one another's personal growth and well-being and those of their immediate family.

TLC has been established by the NSP as an outreach to Presvyteres, our fellow sisters in Christ. TLC is a network of independent volunteer listeners, each of whom is a Presvytera and a member of the NSP. These volunteer listeners make themselves available at specified hours to receive phone calls from sister Presvyteres. Through such calls listeners provide outreach, enhance fellowship and promote friendship with other clergy wives of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.

2. WHO MAY SERVE AS A LISTENER?

Any NSP Presvytera who has time and love to give to a fellow sister Presvytera may volunteer to serve as a listener. However, it is important to be aware that TLC volunteers cannot diagnose, advise, counsel or provide treatment of any kind. Therefore, licensed professionals (e.g. in the fields of medicine, nursing, counseling/psychotherapy, social work and law) should not serve as volunteer listeners.

Because this is a purely volunteer program for fellowship and outreach only, no formal application process is required and no screening of volunteers is conducted by NSP. However, NSP specifically reserves the right to prohibit any individual from serving as a volunteer listener at the NSP's sole discretion, if it feels that the involvement of such individual violates the guidelines in this policy, or does not promote the spirit, purpose and goals of the NSP.

Presvyteres wishing to volunteer should contact the TLC chairwoman, who shall be appointed by the NSP. Prior to participation in TLC, listeners shall be required to sign a statement indicating that they have read, understood and agreed to comply with this TLC Policy and Guidelines.

3. TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEER LISTENERS

Volunteer listeners should complete a training seminar in listening skills prior to their participation with TLC. Such training seminars should emphasize the role of the volunteer as a "listener" rather than a counselor. Two possible seminars are (1) Equipping Ministries International (which is a Christian based program) or (2) Contact USA (which is a secular program).

These two programs provide seminars in various parts of the country and should be available to Presvyteres in most locations. However, these seminars are not available in a particular part of the country, or if a Presvytera wishes to complete a different seminar or receive an exception to these general requirements, she should contact the TLC chairwoman. The NSP does not endorse any listening training program or seminar and reserves the right to change the above seminar list. Training/seminar costs are the sole responsibility of the listener, as the NSP is unable to make funds available for such a program at this time. (Note: the cost of the seminars listed above is approximately \$200.00).

The chairwoman of TLC shall assist each volunteer in identifying and scheduling participation in a listening training seminar.

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4. LISTENERS MAY NOT PROVIDE ADVICE

TLC listeners may not provide spiritual, clinical, medical or other advice of any kind. Callers are encouraged to contact licensed health care and/or other professionals if they are in need of diagnosis, advice, counseling or treatment. In addition, TLC is not intended to replace a Presvytera's relationship with her spiritual father. TLC listeners should make callers aware of these requirements.

TLC listeners may not refer callers to specific health care providers/licensed professionals, but may refer callers to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese Confidential Assistance Program (CAP). Callers with spiritual questions should be encouraged to contact their spiritual father or another Orthodox Priest.

5. OPERATION OF TLC

A list of volunteer listeners shall be made available by the NSP (via the TLC chairwoman) through the NSP Newsletter and/or other means deemed appropriate by the NSP. This list shall indicate the specific hours during which a particular volunteer listener is available and the phone number to be used by the callers. (Each volunteer listener may select her own hours; however, a minimum of 2 hours per week is encouraged). Volunteer listeners are expected to be available during scheduled hours and must provide the TLC chairwoman with prompt notice of a change in scheduled hours or resignation from the program.

Callers are responsible for all telephone charges incurred in connection with TLC. It is recommended that calls be no longer than one hour in duration.

The NSP may verify the training programs/seminars in which each volunteer listener has participated.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

All calls and conversations made/held in connection with TLC, as well as the identity of a caller, must be maintained in strict confidence by the volunteer listener. Any listener may be removed from the program by the NSP, in its sole discretion, for failure to comply with this confidentiality policy.

I have read and understand the attached TLC Policy and Guidelines (the Policy). I agree to comply with the Policy, including, but not limited to the Confidentiality requirements contained in the Policy. I understand that my failure to comply with the Policy may result in immediate termination of my participation in TLC program.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____