

**Senior Peer Counseling for Placer County Older Adults**  
**Melinda Lacey, Senior Peer Counseling Coordinator**

Placer County Senior Peer Counseling (PCSPC) provides education and services to support the wellness and self-sufficiency of the older adults of Placer County. Volunteers provide counseling for residents in the privacy of their own homes. Placer County residents aged 55 and older are eligible for counseling services at no cost. Senior Peer Counseling is strictly confidential.

Why Senior Peer Counseling?

As we age, life transitions can sometimes be painful. The loss of a lifetime companion, medical illness, physical disability, retirement, or relocation can be upsetting. Sometimes it is helpful to talk with someone near your own age. A Senior Peer Counselor can help you address these concerns in a safe, confidential environment.

Senior Peer Counselors assist with challenges of family conflicts, loss of independence/driver's license, access to community resources, caregiver stress, depression and anxiety, loneliness, and substance abuse. Senior Peer Counselors are there to listen, support, and provide resources. The length and frequency of the sessions is determined by the counselor, but is typically once per week for approximately an hour.

Clients have expressed satisfaction with relief from loneliness, depression, grief, and are often better able to cope better with the issues of aging. Referrals for counseling come from a variety of sources, including family members, Adult Protection Services, home health nurses, In Home Supportive Services, hospital social workers, and mental health professionals.

Volunteer Senior Peer Counselor Selection and Training

Senior Peer Counselors are older adults who are carefully selected, professionally trained and certified to provide volunteer supportive counseling to other seniors with aging concerns. Counselors receive 30 hours of training, weekly supervision by mental health professionals, and regular ongoing training.

A recently-completed training class for new counselors included a presentations by Patrick Arbore of the Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention & Grief Related Services; In-Home Supportive Services; Adult Protective Services; Placer Independent Resources Services, Del Oro Caregivers, Eldon Luce of the Placer Older Adult Advisory Commission, and mental health first aid training experts.

**To request counseling services**, please contact Melinda Lacey, Senior Peer Counseling Coordinator at (530) 886-3413. All referrals are confidential and are subject to approval by the Senior Peer Counseling Coordinator and availability of a Senior Peer Counselor.

**To explore the possibilities of becoming a volunteer Senior Peer Counselor**, call Melinda Lacey, Senior Peer Counseling Coordinator, at (530) 886-3413.

*Melinda Lacey is an employee of the Placer County Adult System of Care. The views expressed here are those of Ms. Melinda Lacey and do not necessarily represent those of the Commission or individual members.*