

Tikvah Program Questions and Answers

I am talking with the clergy, so why would I need this service – how is it different from clergy support?

The Tikvah program is designed to augment your talking with the clergy. You will have the opportunity, through the Tikvah program, to meet regularly with a trained volunteer who can provide additional support during a difficult time. This will not replace the support you receive from the clergy, but is additional help available to you.

Why would the program be good for me?

If you are experiencing something difficult, Tikvah could be right for you. We all face challenging times in our lives. Having the opportunity to talk openly and confidentially about your situation with a supportive, concerned person can be extremely healing and helpful. Tikvah volunteers are trained and available to support you in a nonjudgmental and caring way.

I am already seeing a therapist – how is this different?

Although all Tikvah volunteers have had extensive training, they are peer counselors rather than professional therapists. They are here to provide additional support during a crisis or difficult time, but do not take the place of your regular therapy.

I have a lot of friends – how is this different from family and/or friend support?

Because Tikvah volunteers are not your family or friends, they can support you in a totally objective, but caring way. You don't have to be concerned about burdening them, being careful what you say, or meeting their needs. This can be the case with loving family and friends; and, as a result, you may not feel the freedom you can feel when you talk to someone who is not personally involved. Friends and family may be worried, want you to feel better, and unknowingly add pressure to you. Tikvah volunteers accompany you on your journey and support you without your having to worry about them or their needs.

Is this confidential?

Your participation in the Tikvah program is confidential and the content of your talks with your Tikvah volunteer is confidential. All Tikvah volunteers understand the importance of confidentiality and respect your privacy. You may see your volunteer at the synagogue, and you will decide together how you want to interact during those times. Your confidentiality is our priority.

What if I don't like the volunteer I am assigned to?

It is essential that you feel comfortable with the Tikvah volunteer you are working with. If, for any reason, it doesn't feel like a "right fit" for you, just talk with the person who referred you and we will quickly assign you to another volunteer. Volunteers know that a cornerstone of the program's success is to have a good match; if this doesn't occur, switching volunteers is encouraged and understood by all.

I don't want anyone thinking I can't handle my own affairs. Would this be uncomfortable?

There are times in everyone's life when they face crises or difficult circumstances. Being able to talk about things and get support is a sign of strength and resiliency.

What would people think if I told them I've used the program?

It is completely your choice whether and with whom you share information about your participation in the Tikvah program. However, from the beginning, the feedback we have gotten from people who hear about it is "Wow... that is great! I wish I had someone like that when I was going through hard times." or "I know someone who could benefit from this. How do I find out more about it?"

There is somebody who needs this more than I do. Why would I take up someone's time when my situation isn't as bad as so many others?

It is natural and good-hearted of you to feel that way; however, there is not a wait list for services, and you will not be taking time away from someone who you may feel has more need. The Tikvah program is designed to help people through all kinds of difficult situations. There are many volunteers available, waiting, and wanting to provide support to our congregation. They are trained to work with congregants going through a wide variety of life issues, and there is nothing too "small" or "minor" for the program.