



Preparing to Say GoodBye

For many of us, saying goodbye is challenging. Whether it's the departure of a PSN team member, a care partner no longer in need, the ending of an event or illness, or the death of the care partner, goodbye is an integral part of life and moving forward. Change is a constant and with it comes the end of one chapter and the beginning of a new chapter in our life.

This section on preparing to say goodbye provides instructors and learners with a wealth of information on how to navigate the process of loss and endings, regardless of significance or magnitude. The overarching message is that good endings produce better beginnings.

This section also reminds us that a PSN team and the care partner have been in a very meaningful relationship with one another and have bonded, even in the midst of high stress and often conflict. For a refresher, refer to [Chapter 8 Summary](#) [1].

Preserving and memorializing the good and personal growth from the challenging aspects reminds the team that their contribution was a gift to all. [Maintaining Your Team](#) [2], the final chapter in the workbook, also prepares the PSN team for good endings, goodbyes to remember and relationships cherished for years to come.

Section Talking Points

- A PSN team can easily evolve into a 'family' dynamic with all the same rewards and challenges. Many of the same issues arise as might in any family – how to manage them to achieve functional and rewarding relationships is covered in this chapter.
- There are a host of reasons why team members depart or the care partner terminates the team or ends a team member's participation. It's important to manage the departure well and honorably, with compassion and appreciation.
- Team members experience a wide range of emotions with endings, regardless of reasons. Anticipate grieving with loss and change. Be patient, understanding, compassionate and committed to honoring the person or persons.
- Be prepared for conflicts – seek to manage conflicts well, if unable to resolve them.
- It's important to honor the commitment of all PSN team members and care partner – even those departing under difficult circumstances or planned departures.
- A resilient PSN team is one where support, encouragement and optimism are foundational attributes.
- Striving for good endings will bring about better beginnings.
- It's not what we do but how we do it that determines outcomes. [Chapter 8 of the PSN book](#) [1] provides learners with many "how to" examples.
- Seeking professional help is indicated when heightened emotions are causing distress or depression that persists.

Getting Started: Prepare to Say Goodbye and Maintaining Your Team

Section Objectives

- Learners are introduced to the importance of saying goodbye to team members or to care partners.
- In all things there is a beginning, middle and end – so too with your PSN team members.
- It's not as much about what we do as it is about how we do it. [Chapter 8](#) [1] guides us through how



to do it – say goodbye – in a healthy and positive way.

- Tackling something difficult like saying goodbye enhances resilience and can sustain rewarding and supportive relationships for many years. Learning to do this well will likely have a positive effect on other areas of life.
- Learners are introduced to endings when team member departs; a care partner no longer is in need or perhaps there is a death. Prepare for an unmanageable conflict or when personal issues arise that cause a departure.
- Learners recognize signs of grieving the loss of a PSN team member or care partner, regardless of reason. Refer to chapter diagrams of the natural evolution of the grieving process.
- The importance of recognizing departing team members with a gratitude ritual or celebration of life.
- Learners accept that each individual copes with loss and endings in different ways emotionally. Encourage learners to not discount or minimize any team member's coping mechanisms.
- Learners are reminded to encourage those having difficulties with complex emotions to seek professional help.
- "Never let yesterday use up too much of today." Author: Will Rogers. This is a reminder to learners that there are endings and there are new beginnings associated with each ending. We are to learn from our yesterdays to navigate our tomorrows with greater resilience, wisdom and compassion.
- Maintaining a PSN team from the beginning and through to a good ending is vital to the wellbeing of all participants.

Skills to Focus On

- **Courage:** It takes courage to learn new skills, to deal effectively with conflict and to work through the grieving process while being open and honest with our feelings and needs.
- **Support For Others:** PSN teams support each other and their care partner even during times of difficulties, disruptions, conflicts, hurts and loss.
- **Management of Conflict:** Not all conflicts are resolved. Most can be managed effectively and with understanding and compassion. Conflicts are not necessarily negative; they can be opportunities to learn, grow, and strengthen resilience and relationships.
- **Emotion Management:** PSN teams and care partners may experience heightened emotions. There are powerful steps to effectively [managing emotions](#) [3]. Also see [Chapter 7](#) [4] in the Workbook.
- **Commitment:** A PSN team makes a commitment to unite for the greater good, the individuals involved and the mission at hand. The team should also commit to embracing each ending with gratitude and with a [ritual or celebration](#) [5].
- **Optimism:** In every adversity there is a seed of equal or greater benefit – it's up to us to seek and find those seeds. A PSN, from the development process to implementation is optimism in action. PSN teams can be made up of solution oriented, outcome driven and optimistic people.
- **Loyalty:** Loyalty is integral to achieving lasting and rewarding relationships. It embodies many desirable traits, including faithfulness, trustworthiness, and dependability. A highly functional PSN values and actively demonstrates loyalty to its members and the cause.

Mistakes to Avoid

- Neglecting to impress upon learners the importance of seeking outside, professional counseling if any team member experiences lasting, heightened emotions from any aspect during or after their participation in your PSN, or this training.
- Avoiding or denying goodbyes even in uncomfortable situations.
- Failing to look for seeds of hope, peace and comfort regardless of circumstances or outcomes.
- Criticism or negative judgment of another's range of emotions or coping mechanisms.
- Undervaluing the importance of maintaining the team, its spirit and its wellbeing.
- Failing to take advantage of the many excellent and useful and very helpful documents and resources provided in the [PSN book](#) [6] and [Workbook](#) [7]. (Also see [Helpful Links](#) [8].)

Exercise 1:

- [Get Started](#)
- [Who We Are](#)



To help the participants see that as they think about goodbyes in the abstract, it's pivotal for them to set actual actions themselves toward the goal of developing personal PSNs and to start down the road to taking action. They will say goodbye to the security of being "learners" as they move on to being leaders and providers for their communities.

- Have a large sheet on the wall with the "[sides of a team](#) [9]" graphic posted on it.
- Have each participant take a piece of paper and write "Actions" on the top.
- Briefly reiterate the goal of having a PSN and ask for a show of hands of participants who want to start taking action.
- Have each participant list 3 actions they will take in the next 3 weeks toward developing a PSN. (You can have them do this individually or in groups of 2 or 3)
- After each person has written 3 actions, ask them to add one more. The fourth one is: "List 3 more steps."
- Tell them to add this fourth one to the bottom every time they add 3 more steps.
- Have the entire group stand up and form a long line, single file (it can circle around the room if necessary). Have each participant walk past the poster on the wall, slap it with their hand, and say, "Yes I will!"
- Lastly, have individuals express appreciation for another's contribution to the group's process through training sessions

Exercise 2:

to help the group deal with a negative event.

- Recruit a volunteer. **Privately** tell this individual to say he or she is leaving in a huff, saying that s/he cannot work with the group any more (but to not single out any one person as being the reason).
- After this person leaves, instruct the group to think of reasons why the person may have left, even if some are farfetched.
- While the group works, this volunteer is to think of a scenario that might have caused the departure.
- Have the volunteer return, listen to the possibilities that the group has thought of ... then give the "real" explanation.
- Ask each person to think of positive ways to say goodbye that relate to either the "real" or a listed hypothetical reason. Have them include a positive or encouraging word for the rest of the group, what they might want the rest of the group to believe going forward.
- Write on the board any group member's recommendation for going forward in a positive manner.

Exercise 3:

to energize the group around getting started developing a PSN. This is an alternative to Exercise #1.

- Have the entire group stand in one circle. If it's too big, they can stand in two circles.
- Tell each person to think of one thing they will do in the coming 2 weeks, either to start on their own PSN, or to help someone else get one started.
- Have each person think of how they want to say goodbye to the group.
- Go quickly around the group, having each person say goodbye to the group, and then hold his or her arms up overhead or out in front, and state in one short sentence the thing he or she is going to do, such as, "I will create an emergency contact list." Or, "I will get started writing a will." Or, "I will talk to my father about where he keeps his important papers."
- It should move very quickly, and almost look like everyone is doing the "wave."



Conclusion

"No bird soars too high if he soars on his own wings." - William Blake.

Your PSN illuminates the benefits and advantages of not going it alone. Your PSN Team is not free of challenges but each challenge provides opportunity for growth, greater resilience and comfort in knowing that 'you matter' and 'others matter to you'. There is no greater gift than loving and being loved or cared about; understood and understanding; giving and receiving. A PSN is how to live life well.

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