

Many Thanks to Órla Casey, Head of Music Therapy at Cambridgeshire Music for this really helpful guidance

Helping customers and officers/managers to manage endings together

In line with the recent training about loss and endings this might be helpful to work through with your teams re helping to finish with customers.

We need to start to think about the transition and that at some point we will not be calling people. It is important to be able to find a way to finish and say goodbye to people as we move them on to less frequent contact and different methods of contact. This may be difficult with some customers as we will have built relationships with them over the past two months. It will be important to acknowledge the relationship you have built during this time and the difficulties that you have managed to hold or help sort out. It would be normal to feel a sense of loss between you and your customer. With some you may also feel a sense of relief as you have been helping them to hold some difficult feelings.

Some customers may find it difficult to say goodbye and you may see increased worry/stress, distancing but also relief. It is important to listen and reassure as much as possible. Ways to help mitigate that are to

1. Begin to prepare customers now with maybe a 2/3 week 'ending' process. Perhaps after the initial check-in etc. so it gives the person time to register and process during the conversation
Egs. of language –

'As you are aware (you may remember) we will need to finish our phone calls in 2 weeks/3 weeks.'

'What might be useful to think about today?' We will be aware of an emotional content and behaviour in the call. We can try to just listen to acknowledge the worry and reassure person that they are heard 'I understand' 'that's a worry for you'

Then try to work on maybe 1 action that is helpful for this week but then 1 action to focus on towards the ending (ie. signposting)

'So we could think about x today'

'Is this something that might be looked after by the next team/service. Who might that be?'

'Our options are xxx but you might be thinking about somebody else'

In this way re loss and ending we are listening but helping person to still have a choice rather than us trying to fix for them or promise them something that is not within our role/capacity just now.

'So today is our final call together.' For a final call we may do a little recap with customer.

'What's been helpful for you?'

'What might we have done differently?'

'This hasn't been achieved yet' but maybe that's something that the next person/your family/the community team might help with'

'What do you think about raising that with them?' 'Is that 1 thing I can help with just now'

We need to try and ensure that there are no unfinished things and that we don't promise things outside the norm that will need to be followed up after the call.

'Is there anything you would like me to pass on to another team?'

Finally the main thing that a person will want is to know that they will be kept in mind

'I remember this eg.' Share something you have done together

'It's been lovely getting to know you. I will remember..... I will be thinking of you and wishing you well.'

NB there is no right or wrong way to do this and not all endings will be nice or feel comfortable. The fact is that you have 'turned up' every week to connect and work with a person through this time. That is enough and appreciated.

Practically and outside of the call

Ensure that signposting systems are correct and up to date

Encourage people to be reaching out to community support over the next few weeks while you are finishing up with them and perhaps refer to this during your phone calls. Ultimately there are people who will make a choice to not reach out or ask for help. We have to respect this as their choice and find a way to let that go for ourselves. Perhaps with a phone call with colleague or manager.

Managers may be able to make space in team calls to check in with team members about **what is going well about endings and what they are finding difficult**. This may be in the spirit of 'fixing' but in the spirit of being listened to and normalising feelings across a team.