

## Peer Perspective October 2020

All good things must come to an end... but that doesn't mean it's easy!!

This month's peer perspective is about ending peer relationships and transition. Peer relationships are unique in that they are structured more like a "friendship", in a way a "professional friendship". As peers we use our lived experiences to relate to the clients and create trust and instill hope.

I have accepted a new job and will be transitioning from my role as a peer support specialist. Having to end my relationships and say goodbye has made for quite the emotional roller coaster these last 3 weeks but as tough as it is I have learned a few things along way.

1. When appropriate take time to meet personally with your peers and clients to explain why your relationship is ending. People living with mental illness often experience a lot of loss and in some situations may come to just expect people to abruptly leave them. Having the opportunity to hear the why your relationship is ending helps the peer as they navigate closure in this situation.
2. Take time to reflect on the good times, lessons learned and milestones that took place during your time working together. As peers we have often had the opportunity to experience many highs and lows with our clients and a time to reflect on those things can validate your relationship with them.
3. Talk to your peers about the future, including the supports that are available to them if they need it. I spent a lot of time reminding my peer clients that while I was leaving, I was leaving them in good hands. We also talked about boundaries and why we can't just be Facebook friends and stay in touch.
4. Self-care is important for you and your peer. While talking about the transition it can be very emotional, so it is important you encourage your peers to use their self-care and coping strategies as well as use your own. This will give them permission to embrace the emotions they are feeling and another opportunity to use the skills they have for dealing with tough stuff.

It's tough leaving any relationship even when it's on good terms but making time to properly say goodbye will make the transition easier for you and your peers.

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