



An instructor introduces a class to the beginning concepts of building a safety net. This section places emphasis on the value and importance of a PSN and why it is vital to our well-being and the well-being of those we love and care about. Part of building a safety net to better navigate life and its changes and challenges, is our willingness and ability to invite others into our circle, to allow them to help, and also to see the strength of a team. Interdependence, not independence, allows us to thrive and become more resilient when life's inevitable changes and challenges happen. Planning ahead allows us to think holistically about what sorts of assistance might be needed to realize a given vision of success.

section talking points

- Ask learners to share experiences about themselves or others who have struggled going it alone. Ask that they compare these with those who have had a circle of family or friends helping and supporting them through changes and challenges. (Keep brief. This participation allows learners and instructors to engage and feel more at ease.)
- Refer to PSN book for additional examples of a successful PSN and its benefits and rewards. (flag chosen stories in advance, with notes of why this particular story has been selected).
- Getting Started: Thinking about family and friends to include in your PSN.

section Objectives

- Recognize the need for and importance of having a PSN.
- Recognize the benefits and rewards of having a PSN.
- Recognize the joy of and compassion demonstrated by supporting others as part of their PSN.
- Visualize circumstances when a PSN works well for themselves and ways in which it can contribute to resilience during times of stress.
- Think about which people help them, and those whom they can help.
- Begin to make lists of family and/or friends or community members (paid or volunteer) whom they would consider asking to be part of their PSN.
- Recognize the importance of having the appropriate legal and financial documentation in order and the importance of sharing this information with only a highly trusted member of the team.
- Begin to envision navigating life surrounded by supporting and caring relationships – not alone or in fear of the unknowns.
- Expand their list of potential resources.

Skills to focus on

1. Positive/Optimism: Fundamental to the development of a highly functional and rewarding PSN is to know that 'you matter' and 'others matter to you'. Learners may not believe they have the circle of family and friends needed to develop a PSN. Encourage learners to continue on with the coursework as it will reveal how to expand their circle of friends and resources.
2. Making Relevant Lists: Encourage learners to start their lists of people they'd want as part of their PSN and a list of people they would like to help. These lists may take days or weeks to complete. They will think of people and be reminded of additional team members if they leave their list out at home.
3. Service to Others: Rewarding relationships are built when both 'give and receive' are valued, demonstrated and honored. Paying forward works!
4. Decision Making: Learners make decisions about their PSN team members and the roles each would fill.

Mistakes to Avoid



- Failing to observe and assist learners struggling with compassion and patience.
- Allowing one or two class members to take up too much class time with anecdotes.
- Failure to reference PSN book and workbook which provide learners with additional information and suggestions.

Exercise 1:

ice breaker or introduction Exercise.

- Divide into groups of two, where they don't know each other.
- Have each person learn his or her partner's name, and why they have decided to attend this session.
- Have each person do the sharing as outlined above.
- Give them one minute each, then bring them back into the group. Have them introduce their partner and tell what brought them to the session.

Exercise 2:

Deeper introduction.

- Divide into groups of two, where they don't know each other.
- Have *each person learn a) his or her partner's name b) what brought them to this session and c) where they think they personally are in crafting their own PSN or that of someone they care about {just starting, about 50% there, or nearly done}*.
- Have them discuss whether they feel they have most of a PSN in place, have lots of work to do, or are about half way there.
- Give *them one minute each, then bring them back into the group. Have them introduce their partner and tell what brought them to the session. Chart where learners are on the board.*

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