



# Asking for Help

For many of us, asking for help is the most challenging and difficult part of creating a highly functional and productive PSN. The reasons are numerous. As Judy Pigott, co-author of PSN, says, "it's all about the stories we tell ourselves". For some, the story is built around losing one's independence by involving others, when the reality is that we go through each day in a state of interdependence. Another common story is built around fear of rejection – not being worthy – "I don't matter." (See handout: [Things that Get in the Way](#) [1].)

## Section Talking Points

- Asking for help is a strength, not a weakness.
- There are barriers to asking for help that help explain why asking's so difficult for many.
- Asking, receiving and giving help are fundamental to building rewarding relationships.
- Fear of rejection are most often built on stories we tell ourselves before we actually ask, and can be modified.
- Expressing gratitude and recognition that giving and receiving help are gifts, not entitlements can expand our horizons.

### Getting Started: Asking for Help and Overcoming Barriers to Asking

## Section Objectives

- To assist participants in recognizing that asking for help does not have to be the near death experience many envision it to be. Practice will make it easier!
- To rewrite the script that independence is a badge of honor when interdependence is the pathway to navigating life well.
- To help participants recognize how the stories they tell themselves that prevent asking for help are usually not reality and can be modified.
- To give participants practice in the experience of asking for help and navigating the continuum of responses during class.
- To offer coaching about reframing rejection - refer to [Chapter 3, page 41/42 of PSN book](#) [2] for examples.
- To guide participants as they acquaint themselves ([page 65 of PSN book](#) [3]) with how they may respond when volunteering to become part of someone else's PSN team and to use this illustration when asking for help or making a list of needs.

## Skills to Focus On

- Managing emotions: The stories we tell ourselves that create barriers to successful asking are often stories rooted in our emotions, not logic. (See [Ask for Help](#) [4].)
- Planning and Organizing: Prior to asking for help, know what it is you are asking for and be as specific as possible, or have your first ask be to help with this. Organizing thoughts and consideration for the team members' abilities and time available is helpful.
- Asking: It's important to plan ahead, be prepared to be flexible if part but not all of your request can be met. Speak clearly and listen without interrupting, if possible. Repeat to clarify and ask questions when in doubt. Refer to care partner's vision and the stated shared values.
- Having empathy and compassion: Express and demonstrate compassion for all team members, their willingness to help and also of their possible need to decline due to their personal circumstances as these change.



- Being courageous: For those who find asking for help a near-death experience, it will take courage until reaching a comfort zone.

## Mistakes to Avoid

- Failing to use the PSN links and the book and workbook for additional talking points and wonderful examples.
- Minimizing how much of a struggle it is for many to ask for help.
- Missing the point – a helping hand is not an entitlement but a time for expressed gratitude – it's a gift.

## Exercise 1:

### To help increase ease with asking.

- Pass out the Scavenger Hunt handout.
- Ask for a volunteer from the group to read the rules of the game out loud to the rest of the group.
- Have the group spend the next few minutes going around and meeting different people, playing the game.
- As the rules say, the game ends when everyone has at least one line through the middle.
- Ask if someone would be willing to talk about how easy or difficult it was to go up to people they didn't know and talk to them, and whether they felt more comfortable after the game.

## Exercise 2:

### To increase comfort with another sort of interpersonal interaction.

- Have the group stand or sit in a circle. If the group is too large, form 2 circles.
- Have each participant make eye contact with someone across the circle.
- As they make eye contact with someone, change places in the circle, maintaining eye contact.
- As they cross in the middle, say hello.
- Multiple people may be changing and crossing at the same time.
- People can change places with more than one person throughout the duration of the game.
- Try to be sure everyone exchanges places at least once.
- Debrief on how it felt to make eye contact and how it felt if they were trying to reach someone, whose eyes were elsewhere.

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## Links

[1] [https://personalsafetynets.com/sites/default/files/handout\\_5\\_things\\_that\\_get\\_in\\_the\\_way.pdf](https://personalsafetynets.com/sites/default/files/handout_5_things_that_get_in_the_way.pdf)

[2] <https://personalsafetynets.com/node/14>

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



[3] <https://personalsafetynets.com/sites/default/files/what-can-i-offer-sample.png>

[4] <https://personalsafetynets.com/asking-giving-help>

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