



Knowing What to Expect and Planning for Emergencies

Instructors introduce learners to the concept of “life happens when we least expect it”; again, preparation and anticipation of physical, emotional, mental, spiritual changes and challenges in the event of life altering circumstances. Most often, life altering events present themselves as a crisis or emergency rather than a minor disruption of daily norms. In the PSN book, [Chapter 6](#) [1], the authors provide compelling examples of life altering situations that can and do happen all too frequently ([Summary of Chapter 6](#) [2]). Although most of us prefer to procrastinate or deny that any such thing could happen to us, taking steps to build a PSN and become better informed and prepared now provides us with an added sense of safety and security. There are many learners experiencing a crisis or long term life altering circumstance who will find helpful solutions, compassion and encouragement from this chapter.

Section Talking Points

- ‘A plan sure beats panic every time.’ Changes and challenges in life happen to all of us at some time. Planning ahead produces far better outcomes than chaos and confusion, especially in an emergency.
- It takes thought and effort to organize a team and have it work well for all.
- It’s realistic to anticipate challenges with a PSN team. Chapter 6 covers the most common of these very human and common ones and provides learners with ‘what to do’ solutions to keep the team going. With the Workbook Appendix’s Extended PSN Personal Data Form, Parts 1, 2 and 3 (Andrew, please link to workbook appendix pages 9,10,11) filled out, information that may be needed in dealing with any emergencies is likely to be right at hand.
- Remember to update information every 5 years.

Getting Started: Keep the Team: Going and Planning for Emergencies

Section Objectives

- Recognize the importance of a plan before it’s needed to achieve better outcomes, resilience and a more cohesive team.
- Consider the ways support may be needed from team members: physical, emotional, spiritual, environmental (physical space), community resources.
- Educate and inform about the scope of feelings experienced by the care partner and care team members, including loss of privacy, coping with anger, resentment, confusion, fears, etc.
- Understand that burnout is to be expected when too much is expected of any one team member. Include indicators and actions when the event or illness is ongoing.
- Reserving judgment about how others act and react during stressful and uncertain circumstances is important. Coping mechanisms differ with each individual – be compassionate, patient, understanding and flexible in search of stability and a new normal.

Skills to Focus On

- Observation: Observe ourselves and team members. Oftentimes, in times of crisis, chaos and uncertainties, attitudes and behaviors change – our coping skills may or may not be serving us or those we are interacting with well. Observation is the first clue to burnout, overwhelmed.
- Management of Fear and Anxiety: Managed heightened emotions, especially fears and anxieties, enable the team to problem solve and make better decisions and choices.
- Inclusion and Recognizing the Value of Diversity: Being open-minded to receiving information or



suggestions from others. Oftentimes people from different walks of life, different cultures and belief systems are more skilled and adaptive in finding solutions or more have more efficient and effective ways of achieving good outcomes.

- Listening: Listening to understand the speaker, needs expressed and the emotions revealed. Confirm that what you heard and processed is the information as the speaker intended.
- Speaking With Care: During stressful times it is important to speak clearly, slowly and seek confirmation that the listeners understood correctly.
- Optimism: Expect the best outcomes but plan for the worst, just in case. 'A plan sure beats panic every time.' Optimism feeds the soul during tough times.
- ICE: Learners take a moment to add ICE (In case of emergency) to their cell phone contacts. Fill out WALLET CARDS. Go to [The Power of Three, a Wallet Card Explained](#) [3]. Go to [What to Say to Others About Your Wallet Card](#) [4]. Request [Books, Wallet Cards or CDs](#) [5].
- Appropriate Task Assignments: learners remember to ask "How will it serve me, others and the mission?" or my PSN team members when planning and assigning tasks or solving problems for good outcomes.

Mistakes to Avoid

1. Placing little value on the importance of boundaries, open and honest dialogue with care partner and PSN team members.
2. Forgetting to remind learners to reach out to trusted others when in doubt or in need of help completing their PSN.
3. Being closed-minded and inflexible.
4. Failing to encourage learners to utilize prepared documents and Website links for additional information and help.

Exercise 1:

To empower the participant and help him/her realize that there are many things he or she can do to help others, to be prepared, to feel more capable. Get people thinking outside of their own small box, and perhaps identify something that isn't on the list.

1. Divide into groups of 3 people.
2. Pass out the handout entitled "What I Can Offer".
3. Instruct all participants to take a moment and identify something on the list they had not thought of before, which they could do to be helpful to someone else.
4. Within their small groups, have each participant share the thing they identified and what they think about discovering something they hadn't thought of.
5. Ask if there are 2 or 3 participants who would like to share with the entire group

Exercise 2 Alternative:

purpose is similar to Exercise 1 above.

1. Break the class into groups of no more than 8 and no fewer than 4.
2. Have each group stand in a circle, with their hands in front, pretending to hold a net like the "Sides of a Net" graphic.
3. Have each participant in the group state what "Pillar" they might be. Are they part of a group (Community)? Could they help collect and interpret documents (legal or financial)? Are they close to family (Familial)? Are they close to co-workers (Professional)?
4. Point out that while it is ideal to have people who can help, or identified resources who cover all [Eight Pillars](#) [6], one would still have a functioning net with fewer. Thinking holistically is the goal. [This diagram may help those who learn visually](#) [7].



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