



FINISHING THE PEER NETWORK WELL

We know that networks have a life cycle, and it might come to a point when the peer network is no longer needed. What do you do when the network has outlived its usefulness?

Hopefully when members leave the group their feedback is positive and they are leaving because they have got what they need from the group.

This is what success looks like: don't confuse it with failure. Celebrate!

Before you do that, just make sure it is really time to let go

It is very important that the peers in the network discuss and confirm any sense that the network is no longer useful. To do this, think about where the low energy is coming from. Here are some possibilities:

You think the peer network should finish

If it is your energy that is low, you may be thinking about finishing the network because you are the chair or facilitator. If so, you could think about how you can leave the network in a way that keeps the network active and strong. This might include talking with network members about who can take over some of the things you have been doing for the network. This will also give you the option of staying in the network but without being the chair/facilitator.

Some of the peer network members think it should finish, but not all members

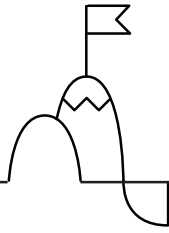
It would be wrong to discontinue the network if there were some members who wanted to keep going and felt that the peer network is still useful to them. If that is the case, think about how they can take over the network, and what help they might need to do this. Some of the other ideas in the workbook might be helpful. Also, there may be other peer networks, or community agencies with the right values, who could be called on to assist the remaining members to take the peer network forward.

If those remaining members are not able to do the future organising, or if there are only one or two members who want to keep going, then it is good to think about how these members could be supported to join other peer networks. Again, other peer networks or community agencies might be able to help with this.

All peer network members agree the network has come to an end

if after trying different ways to keep going, all members agree the peer network has one all it can, then it is time to let go. If so, it is important the peer network has a good finish.





Finishing up well

Here are some ideas for how your peer network can have a good finish:

Capture everyone's learning

Why did the network achieve what it did? How did we do this? Perhaps a member could write this up, or record it graphically, or make a short video, and publish on social media, or share with all of the network's members and supporters, and with other networks. Celebrate the learning

Capture individual learning

What has changed for individual peers because of the network? What can they do now that they couldn't before? Capture those success stories and tell them to anyone who is interested to help grow a peer movement everywhere.

Honour individual contributions

Make sure there is plenty of time at the last meeting for gratitude and acknowledgment of everyone. Make sure that every member of the group leaves the network, having their unique contribution spoken about by others. This will leave everyone feeling great about what they achieved individually

Honouring the contribution of the network

Make sure you have a final farewell celebration where people tell stories, show photos and share memories This will leave everyone feeling good about finishing up.

Swap contact details

Technology makes it a lot easier for members to stay in touch, email and social-media enable connections to be strengthened and friendships developed, even if the network doesn't continue.

Honouring the contribution of supporters and allies

Use your contact lists, look back over people who contributed to the network. Make sure to thank them and share the achievements of the network with them, so they can see what they have contributed to. You could also invite your supporters to the farewell celebration to thank them for their support.

Complete outstanding tasks

Do you have reports to funders? Close bank accounts, discontinue social media or a website, returning equipment etc. Write a list and make sure the network has met all its responsibilities



Checklist for letting go and finishing up well

- Chat with the members of the network
- Finish well by ensuring all obligations are met
- Capture collective learning
- Capture individual learning
- Celebrate achievements
- Maintain connections



The final seventh golden bead has now been added to the string of beads.

Reflection

Take a moment to think about whether your peer network has fulfilled its purpose and can come to an end. How will you celebrate the success and achievements of the peer network? Is there still a gap that another different peer network could fill?
