

“THE LAST MEETING – SAYING GOODBYE”

As a volunteer, you may need to cease your services for a variety of reasons. Ending a relationship that has developed between you and the care receiver can often be difficult. You, as the volunteer, have the responsibility to bring this relationship to closure.

If your reasons for wanting to cease services are due to personality clashes or “burn out”, it is wise to first discuss your feelings with your Volunteer Coordinator. There may be information about the person that you were unaware of which could help you better understand their personality and attitudes. If the situation can be resolved, ending your volunteer services may not be necessary.

In the case where the situation cannot be resolved, you should discuss it with the concerned parties and work toward an understanding. It is best for all to end the relationship if a negative situation cannot be resolved. Remember, you are supported and may need to ask for assistance from your Volunteer Coordinator.

Communication plays an important part in bringing closure to any relationship. It is especially important because your bond with the person may have deepened over time, and you may have become an integral part of a circle of support.

Here are some suggested guidelines:

- Try to prepare for your departure by telling the individual in advance that you will be ending your services with them.
- Do not give the person false hope for your return if you do not intend to return.
- Notify your Volunteer Coordinator that you will be ceasing your volunteer services.
- If appropriate and truthful, express your own sadness, using “I” messages about the ending of the relationship. Often this will enable the other person to express their feelings and this sharing helps to bring the relationship to a peaceful closure.