

## Reflecting on Endings Worksheets for Therapists

### **This pack includes:**

**3 x Worksheets** that can be printed and used in individual or group therapy sessions or provide stimulus for developing your own ideas.

Each worksheet features a creative task with two activity choices:

- 1) An image can be made relating to the emotional learning cards discussed.
- 2) Or use the art sheets provided at the back of the pack to create patterns based on helicopter seeds & leaves which can be decorated in imaginative ways to reflect endings in nature.

**1 x article 'Reflecting on Endings'** by Lyn French, A Space Director and

**7 x Art Sheets** which take **Neeta Madahar's** image '**Sky, Seeds and Me**' and 1950's fabric pattern as inspiration.

### **IDEAS for using the art sheets provided:**

#### **Using the Word Banks provided**

Cut up the WORD BANKS provided to accompany each worksheet and keep them separate in 3 small boxes or envelopes. Use them to stimulate conversation and to give clients ideas of the kinds of feelings and thoughts which come up during endings. They can be brought out at any time in the session. You can lay them out on the table and ask the client to select the ones they relate to most. Or lay them all print-side down and ask your client to turn them over one by one and talk in more general terms about the feelings we all go through during endings.

#### **Colouring in/ Pattern making**

Use the leaf + helicopter seed pages either as 'colouring in' sheets (1 or 2 per session) or to paint/ colour, cut out and arrange on a larger piece of paper against a painted or drawn background. You can add to the pages by researching line drawings of leaves, pop art and pattern making on the internet, creating your own outlines in black felt tip which can be photocopied/ scanned and printed so that you have a large collection of blank leaves that can be traced around or used. You can print on different kinds of paper and create leaves of differing sizes.

#### **Creating branches, vines or trees**

Prepare drawings of branches, vines or trees onto which the leaves can be glued or ask your client to draw them in the session. If working in a group, you

might choose to create a large tree for all the leaves. Use the leaf pages to copy from to make smaller leaves. Use different paper for the leaves (eg. make one branch/ vine/ tree with tissue paper leaves, another with gold + silver and a 3<sup>rd</sup> one with leaves that have been painted.) Create a small forest of trees or a series of vines which can be joined together.

### **Creating a backdrop reflecting 'emotional weather'**

Ask your client to make a series of abstract paintings to illustrate 'emotional weather' (eg. stormy, calm, rainy etc). While these 'weather paintings' are drying, make a series of trees, some with leaves, some with leaves swirling in the wind, some bare etc which can be glued onto the paintings once dry. Or have available printed images of trees in different seasons to be cut out and glued on. This work captures the unsettled emotions we all feel around endings.

### **Symbolic 'containers'**

Ask your client to colour/ paint a selection of leaves from the sheets provided and cut them out. Divide them into two sets. Write on the back of the leaves in set 1 difficult or uncomfortable feelings associated with endings and on set 2, good memories of endings including current achievements and gains. Create two boxes or decorate 2 envelopes, one for difficult feelings and one for good memories+ personal gains. The client can take away one or both at the end.

## Reflecting on Endings Worksheet 1: Looking Back on Beginnings

**RESOURCES:** Print off 1 or 2 of the art sheets included at the end of this pack. You can also choose to add to the selection of leaves and seeds. Feelings + memories can be written in/ around the leaves using the Word Bank provided on the theme of Beginnings or leaves/ seeds can be cut out and words written on the reverse. If you are using art, the leaves can be painted and decorated. (refer to the 'Ideas' page for tips). **IMAGES FEATURED:** **Doris Salcedo** **Noviembre 6 y 7** from 'Who are you? Where are you going?' & **Neeta Madahar** **Sky, Seeds and me** from 'What do you feel?'

### INTRODUCTION

Endings occur naturally throughout the life cycle. Our time as babies comes to an end and we grow into small children. We start and finish primary school before transferring to secondary school, going onto college, getting a job and so forth. The endings which mark each phase of development are shared by everyone. Each of us will experience other endings too. For example, people important to us move on or die. We might leave a familiar neighbourhood, home, school or place of work and have to start again, making new friends and getting used to new routines. Some endings are expected while others take us by surprise. We all have a reaction to endings, especially those which trigger feelings such as sadness, anger, fear or disappointment. Over the next few weeks, we'll be thinking about the common thoughts and feelings associated with endings.

### USING ART TO EXPLORE FEELINGS

There is no right or wrong way to interpret art. All art brings up feelings and ideas unique to each of us. This artist, **Doris Salcedo**, has created a series of images of chairs hung on the outside walls of a tall building. In the first photograph, there is only one lone chair but by the end of the series, the walls are crowded with them. One way of reading this art work is to see it as capturing the experience of starting something new. At first, we might feel isolated and very much on our own like the solo chair in Salcedo's first picture before we gradually find our place amongst others. Feeling we are part of a community is important as it gives us a sense of belonging.

### WHAT DO YOU FEEL?

When we know an ending is coming up, it is helpful to look back so that we are reminded of what it was like at the beginning.

- *Why have we been meeting every week?*
- *What did you feel about seeing me when we first started? Have your feelings changed?*
- *Describe other beginnings (eg. first day at school; first time you met a baby sibling etc).*

### CREATIVE EXERCISE

In nature, seasons have a beginning, middle and end just like life. Trees symbolise the life cycle: their leaves come up as buds then grow to full size before drifting to the ground where they gradually disintegrate. In spring, the tree's life begins again. This reminds us that beginnings and endings are interlinked. Renewal is part of the life cycle. **Neeta Madahar's** image captures this. She has photographed a tree's seeds whirling through the sky. Over the next few weeks, we can use nature to symbolise beginnings and endings. For example, you can make leaves using the shapes provided or draw your own and decorate them with patterns or words related to endings.

Or you might want to use another approach. Reflecting on today's theme of beginnings, you could follow **Doris Salcedo's** lead and draw a comic strip or story board featuring chairs in a room or around a table with the number of chairs increasing or decreasing to represent people

coming into our lives and leaving. Use some of the words from the WORD BANK to support learning about the common feelings and thoughts we all have around beginnings.

### WORD BANK 1 Looking Back on Beginnings: Common Thoughts & Feelings

Use the thoughts and feelings outlined below or come up with your own to help in identifying common responses to starting something new.

<b>Common reasons why young people or adults see someone like me</b>	To learn about feelings in general	To express difficult feelings through talking, making art & creative play	To feel more settled inside
To explore feelings & thoughts about school life	To explore feelings & thoughts about family life	To explore feelings & thoughts about friendships	To explore very personal feelings & thoughts about oneself & one's life
To learn to trust	To improve confidence	To build the capacity to concentrate	To make positive changes
To experiment with a new kind of relationship	To feel less anxious or stressed	To cope better with change & loss	To understand angry feelings
<b>Common feelings &amp; thoughts which come up when we start something new</b>	<i>We might feel:</i>  SHY & SELF-CONSCIOUS	NERVOUS as if we are 'under a spot light'	DOUBTFUL – <i>will this make a difference?</i>
EXCITED – <i>it's interesting to try something new</i>	CONFUSED- <i>what's it all about?</i>	CURIOUS – <i>this is something different</i>	ANGRY- <i>why do I have to come?</i>
UNCERTAIN- <i>not knowing what to expect</i>	DISTRUSTFUL – <i>is this good or bad?</i>	UNCOMFORTABLE – I don't like being the centre of attention	HOPEFUL - <i>I may grow &amp; develop in a positive way</i>

## Reflecting on Endings Worksheet 2: Past Goodbyes

**RESOURCES:** Print off 1 or 2 more of the art sheets included at the end of this pack. You can also add to the selection of leaves and seeds. Feelings + thoughts can be written in/ around the leaves using the Word Bank provided on the theme of Past Goodbyes or leaves/ seeds can be cut out and words / memories written on the reverse. If you are using art, the leaves can be painted and decorated, adding to those already made, or creating a new piece of work. (Refer to the 'Ideas' page for tips). **IMAGES FEATURED:** *Zarina Hashmi Homes I Made / A Life in Nine Lives* from 'Who are you? Where are you going?' & *Neeta Madahar Sky, Seeds and me* from 'What do you feel?'.

### INTRODUCTION

Endings take different forms. They may be expected such as the end of a holiday or another year drawing to a close. Or they might come as a surprise or even a shock. For example, we might find out that someone important to us is moving away or a member of our family is leaving. Perhaps someone we know has died or we have lost a family pet. When these kinds of endings happen, we might not have time to prepare. Making sense of past endings, especially those times when there hasn't been the chance to think about them or to say a proper goodbye, is a helpful way to come to terms with the kinds of losses in life that we all experience at some point or another.

### USING ART TO EXPLORE FEELINGS

**Zarina Hashmi's** framed prints show us floor plans illustrating different kinds of homes. There is one missing near to the top. Perhaps this conveys the idea that we might have to move home even if we don't want to, leaving us with a sense of loss. Or perhaps the empty space in the middle of the row suggests that the people who make where we are living feel like home have moved on or even died.

### WHAT DO YOU FEEL?

- *What is your earliest memory of saying goodbye?*
- *Have you moved home or school or has a friend moved - what feelings came up then?*
- *Describe times when you said goodbye to people important to you. Who were they? What did you feel like then? What do you feel like now, looking back on that time of your life?*
- *Have you said goodbye to a person or place you knew you'd never see again? Have your parents moved home or country? What thoughts or feelings might come up when we know we may never return?*

### CREATIVE EXERCISE

You might want to continue to build on the theme of nature, following **Neeta Madahar's** example. (Look again at her image entitled '**Sky, Seeds and Me**'.) If you've already made some leaves, you can add to your collection or begin anew. There is no right or wrong way to approach your art making. Our leaves or trees can include patterns or colours not found in nature. You can arrange them against a blue background to suggest falling leaves, following the example of Neeta Madahar, or make a pattern with them or place them on a circular wreath or on a vine, branch or tree. Perhaps you want to keep them as a collection of individual leaves and make an envelope or a small box to put them in if you haven't done so already.

Alternatively, you can use another creative approach. For example, reflecting on today's theme of past goodbyes, you may choose to follow Zarina Hashmi's example and draw a series of imaginary floor plans or houses which capture those places where people you've said goodbye

to have lived or where you've lived before. Use some of the words from the WORD BANK on the next page to support learning about common feelings we all have around saying goodbye.

### WORD BANK 2 Saying Goodbye: Common Thoughts & Feelings

Use the thoughts and feelings outlined below or come up with your own to help in identifying common responses to saying goodbye to people or places.

SAD & TEARFUL- we may never meet again (or we may never go back there again)	ANGER – why do we have to say goodbye to people and to familiar places?	GOOD TIMING – I'm ready to move on	RELIEF – I'll leave behind some difficult experiences
SHOCK – I didn't know that an ending was coming	FEAR- will I manage when they're gone?	CONFUSION – will I see them (or that place) again?	WORRY – have they gone forever?
DISAPPOINTMENT – I didn't think _____ (teacher/ parent/ friend/ relative) would leave	Feeling 'erased' – I don't trust that I'll be remembered	Feeling angry – yet another unwanted goodbye	Feeling left behind
Feeling hopeful – we will meet again	Accepting that change happens	Feeling ready for a new beginning	Having new opportunities
Ready to start again	Looking forward to new relationships	Good memories last forever	Life is made up of beginnings & endings and hello's & goodbyes

## Reflecting on Endings Worksheet 3: Acknowledging Achievements & Gains

**RESOURCES:** Print off 1 or 2 more of the art sheets included at the end of this pack and make available any other leaf, seed or tree shapes you're created or downloaded. The client can continue to develop their work in the style already underway or try a different approach. The Word Bank provided on the theme of achievements & gains can be used to help you and your client identify what has changed and what insights or new self-beliefs they are taking away from their sessions with you. **IMAGES FEATURED:** *Shirin Neshat Bonding* from 'How do we live well with others?' & *Neeta Madahar Sky, Seeds and me* from 'What do you feel?'

### INTRODUCTION

Relationships are an important part of life. Our first experience of interacting with others starts in the family before we begin to make relationships of our own outside of the home. The word 'relationship' comes from 'relate'. Relating to others includes doing things together, talking together and sharing aspects of our personal life with others. Relating in this way helps us to feel connected and gives us a sense of belonging. It also supports us in learning about ourselves and understanding that we all share similar feelings even if our life experiences differ.

### WHAT DO YOU FEEL?

In everyday life, we don't usually get the chance to prepare for endings or to identify what we have got from our relationships. Today we are going to look together at the ways in which you have benefitted through meeting with me. We'll be thinking about how you have developed during our time together, what's changed for you and what you have gained.

- *Let's reflect again on why you and I have been meeting. What has changed since we first began?*
- *What are your best memories of coming here? What did you like least?*
- *How have you developed as a person since coming here?*

We are better prepared for the future if we:

Accept that being open to new experiences takes courage	Hold in mind a positive sense of self and accept who we are	Recognise our strengths and build on them	Accept that we all have difficult feelings from time to time but that we can manage them or ask for help
Know that it takes courage to have new relationships and new experiences	Know that we can change the way we see ourselves and the world around us	Remember that leaving the familiar behind can be a little scary for everyone	Accept that endings are a part of life

### CREATIVE EXERCISE

If you have been working on the theme of nature, taking **Neeta Madahar's** image as a starting point, you might want to make a new set of leaves to capture your personal gains and achievements, using the WORD BANK to help you.

Alternatively, you can use a different creative approach. For example, reflecting on today's theme of relationships and what we gain from them, you may choose to follow **Shirin Neshat's** lead and draw a series of hands in different sizes or just trace your own a number of times. Cut them out and arrange them on another piece of paper so that they are touching or nestled together to represent relationships. Write in the hands what you've gained from coming here. Use the WORD BANK provided to help you with this.

### **WORD BANK 3 Common Ways in Which We Gain From Meaningful Relationships with Others**

Use the thoughts and feelings outlined below or come up with your own to help in identifying the ways in which we grow and develop through our relationships with others.

Being more able to communicate more honestly & more freely	Feeling more comfortable inside	Understanding feelings better	Building our confidence
Finding out new things about ourselves	Understanding our current and past life better	Having a more positive self-image & discovering what makes us unique	Learning how to express ourselves freely
Learning to trust others	Getting used to forming a relationship with someone new	Showing courage by continuing with the relationship even when it feels unfamiliar or difficult	Being open to new experiences
Being prepared to try again when things don't work out	Learning to take risks	Feeling things are going better in our lives in general	Having a better relationships with family members or teachers
Feeling more relaxed	Having better relationships with our peers	Being able to concentrate	Feeling we are valued
Learning that we can cope with change	Learning about feelings – the good ones and the difficult ones	Learning how to make sense of past experiences	Accepting that we all have good days & bad days

## Reflecting on Endings

by Lyn French, A Space Director, Counsellor and **psychoanalytic** psychotherapist

*Thinking about endings brings up related subjects such as how we view time. In this text which has been featured as a blog on the [Iniva Creative Learning website](#), I reflect on the theme of time passing, and our relationship to it. The ideas explored can help you in your preparations for finishing sessions with clients and in processing your own response to endings.*

In everyday life, time marks out the minutes, hours and days of our week. Maybe we imagine time is on our side and we have the luxury of going at our own pace without being under pressure to rush. In other instances, time can feel persecuting, as if it's going to run out before we can accomplish what we set out to do. We learn about time in our earliest months when, as infants, a delay in our needs being met brings into being a 'felt awareness' or an 'embodied knowledge' of a time lag between desire and its fulfilment. In some instances, our infantile frustration at having to wait will have been tinged with a primal dread that our cries might go unnoticed, threatening our very survival. No mother can be ever-present for her baby nor would it be helpful – we need to become aware that there is an 'other' who is separate from us and on whom we are dependent so that the scene is set for learning to relate to those around us. The absent mother, when experienced in manageable 'doses', lays the foundation for developing a concept of time and an awareness of separateness. The need to develop a repertoire of sounds and signals in order to communicate is stirred and the first sign of 'language' begins to evolve. Studies show that babies do not simply communicate hunger or the need to be changed but express a wish to relate to, and engage with, the mother in part to generate a feeling of connectedness to counteract the 'alone-ness' that comes with feeling separate.

In later years, our relationship to time is influenced by the interplay between factors rooted in the 'here and now' and our emotional geography. The latter comprises the layers of experience we have amassed, each conscious or unconscious 'memory' embedded with emotionally charged psychic material dating from infancy onwards. For those who have enjoyed 'good enough' early experiences of feeding, weaning, separation and loss, waiting for gratification or for 'time to tell' is not so intolerable. At the other end of the spectrum are those for whom the reality of frustration, ratcheted up by the unconscious fear of being left abandoned with needs unmet, came too soon and too frequently, leaving a reservoir of terror often hidden under a thin crust of anger. Calling out in the dark when there is no corresponding reply brings to mind **Bani Abidi's** photograph entitled **Intercommunication devices, 2008**. Speaking into an intercom, anticipating a response but receiving none, can be disappointing or worse, echoing one's earliest experiences of searching for a connection.

Implicit in our concept of time is the unavoidable fact that all which begins also ends. In common with the woman in **Sonia Boyce's** pastel and ink drawing **Big Women's Talk / She aint holding them up, she's holdin on (some English Rose) 1984/5**, we all carry memories of times past, especially those rooted in family, and we re-shape these memories as the years advance. Maybe the end of childhood, for instance, is now seen as marked primarily by losses rather than gains. Gone are the moments of carefree play and excited exploration, replaced by long school days defined by learning, sitting tests and encountering social challenges with peers. Or perhaps childhood's end brings the pleasure derived from increased independence and the chance to try to shape our own destiny. For some, moving on from childhood into adolescence is a welcome relief as distance can be placed between oneself and other members of the family which may be the only way painful, conflicted or confusing relationships can be managed or even survived. Many of us may have been called upon to provide emotional support for vulnerable parents, propping them up, or have simply 'held on' until such time as we can leave home and carve out our own lives. Our perceptions of childhood, and what the transition into adolescence signifies, will be coloured by how we remember the past which, in turn, will, to some extent, determine what we project into the future.

None of us can shed our past but it does not have to hold us in its grip. We can look back on it and gain an understanding of the bigger picture. **Sudhir Patwardhan's** image **Family Fiction 2010** reminds us that we all create stories about our family members and our relationships. For example, if our father left when we were young and has not maintained contact, we might explain this by convincing ourselves that we are of little interest or value and even 'unloveable'. This story can harden into a core belief either consciously or unconsciously and colour the image we project of ourselves throughout the remainder of our lives. Alternatively, we can try to figure out why a father might leave and never return. Perhaps the guilt he feels about not being able to sustain a healthy relationship with our mother is too great to be borne. Or he might have been abandoned himself in early years and simply not know how to be a father. Perhaps he is compelled to 'keep moving' to hold at bay unconscious fears and anxieties. Whatever the psychological context, which we may never uncover, there will always be an emotional subtext. No one sets out to be an absent father but is usually driven into this position by unconscious forces which will have a powerful emotional content. If we place ourselves centre stage in the stories we create about our family relationships, we may risk living out a life built on a very disempowering self-image based purely on speculation and 'fictionalised' stories we tell ourselves.

To further complicate matters, many of us idealise what we feel we've missed out on. If, for example, we haven't had a father available to us, or if we had adoptive or foster parents, we might hold onto a rose-tinted picture of what being a member of a 'real' family might be like. Perhaps we imagine the relationship between a birth parent and a child being one defined by intuitive attunement and mutual love as **Shirin Nesha's** photograph **Bonding, 1995** seems to depict. However, Nesha's image captures a moment in time, not a continuous 'flow'. If we romanticise what we haven't experienced ourselves, we may end up looking for the ideal relationship later in life to compensate for what we feel we've lacked. This can lead to unrealistic expectations, inevitable disappointment and a perpetual feeling that we have been left behind. All of us have to work through the ending of childhood illusions. Life isn't as smooth or as seamless as our fantasies might have us believe or as some advertising images or accounts of celebrities' lives might construct.

We can idealise times of the year as well as relationships. As the summer months draw nearer, we are reminded of how holidays conjure up seductive images of endless sunny days symbolising freedom, pleasure-seeking and relief from work. We all carry memories of the end of the school year and remember the excitement it stirs up. However, what can be forgotten are the goodbyes we've said to favourite teachers, the loss of daily structures and the fractious moments that can arise between siblings or friends when boredom inevitably sets in. Summer may bring relief from the cold of winter and the wet days of spring but the 'emotional weather' continues regardless of where we are and how we are spending our holidays. Most of us yearn for the 'perfect family vacation', forgetting that relationships still feature ups and downs no matter how idyllic the setting or the weather! Mixed conditions' are bound to be the order of the day.













