

# PLANNED ENDINGS

## Case study

### Arthur

Arthur is a 72-year-old man who has been attending counselling following the death of his long-term partner in a car accident. The loss was profoundly difficult for Arthur who has struggled to cope living alone, and re-build his life. Arthur attended counselling in third-sector setting, which offered every client up to 12 sessions of therapy. Arthur was therefore aware of the number of sessions available. He found therapy to be extremely useful and said in his last session that it had been particularly helpful to know when therapy was going to end. He said that it was unlike the death, which came as a terrible shock.

## Case study

### Daphne

Daphne has been attending psychotherapy for anxiety and panic attacks for two months. She is finding the work very helpful and believes she is making progress: not having had a panic attack during that time. No time limitations were set for the sessions and both Daphne and her counsellor agreed they would continue seeing each other for as long as was necessary. However, Daphne is successful in getting a new job out of the area. She will be around for a further three months: her and her counsellor re-negotiate their contract and work towards this new ending.

## Pause for reflection

- 1 What might have been helpful for Arthur in having a defined ending, given his circumstances?
- 2 What might be the relative advantages and disadvantages of having a fixed end-point when working with bereavement?
- 3 What might the counsellor and Daphne have considered in the process of re-contracting for the new ending?
- 4 How might you need to change your style of working if a new end-point becomes apparent?

