

So, I am Mark Evans, I am head of Spiritual Care and Bereavement Lead for NHS Fife. My Main Role is to develop and deliver spiritual care within health and social care settings, and the changing face of what spiritual care is.

Historically and traditionally, it has been a very religious-based model, very much based on meeting people's religious needs, but we now recognise that spiritual care is a core part of person-centred care. People are more than just cells and atoms that go wrong. They have thoughts and feelings, and hopes and dreams which, when faced with illness can often be challenged, and they need support through that to find meaning and purpose.

I suppose, for me, the key message is that when we are face with patients, or relatives who have experienced bereavement or end of life care, that we should be looking at how we meet their spiritual needs and remembering that spiritual needs is not necessarily the same as religious needs.

Spirituality is about what gives us life, what gives us breath, what gives us hope, and it's about our hopes, our dreams, the people we love, the people who love us. And those relationships are really called into question and can be really struggled around at times of bereavement and death, and it's finding out what people in themselves need or how we can support those who don't know what they need. It's about creating a safe space, but also a brave space. Its about creating a brave space where people can talk about their deepest hurts, their deepest pain. They can share their tears, their anguish, those tears that well up from deep inside which we never think are going to stop. And sometimes its just about holding somebody's hand and simply being.

My background is that I trained as a nurse over thirty years ago, and I remember as a student nurse, a patient dying and getting fairly upset. It was a young man, the same age as myself at the time - late teens, and I remember a tear rolling down my eye. The Matron was with me, and she grabbed me, and she took me out of the ward, and she said to me "Student nurse Evans, you're a professional. You do not show your emotions". I suspect over 30 years, things have started to change quite dramatically. We recognise that bereavement can have a huge impact on the carers and on staff, so part of my work, which I'm finding really exciting just now, is about education, it's about training, it's about helping staff find ways to build resilience. It's about helping staff to find coping strategies, and it's also just about caring for staff.

The film was produced in March 2020 and can be found at [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk) or <https://vimeo.com/392426882>

For more information visit [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk) or contact [supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk)

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