



NHS Education for Scotland

Transcript of 'Development of a Bereavement Charter for Scotland' video

- Dr. Donald Macaskill, Chief Executive Scottish Care

Talking about death and dying is really hard for anybody and sometimes that means that we avoid people once they have experienced a death in their family or their community. People talk about individuals literally crossing the street in order to avoid a conversation. Bereavement is how we support an individual through those very difficult hard moments and weeks and months and years after somebody has died. A number of professionals and individuals who have experienced the death of somebody close to them have got together to draw up a Charter and a Charter to describe what Scotland could be like if we really support those who are experiencing the loss of someone if we really support them well.

This work has been brought about by a desire to change things to make sure that in Scotland we can do all that we can to support people who might be facing difficulties following the death of someone they know or somebody in their community. So the Charter has brought together statements which are really about a description of what Scotland could be like in order that we better support somebody who is experiencing bereavement. It is based on Human Rights principles, and human rights aren't really first and foremost about the law, although that might be important, but they are about a set of values which make you feel that you are valued, that you are treated with dignity, that your voice is heard and that if you are facing difficulties you are able to find a means by which those difficulties can be met.

So the Charter for Bereavement is hopefully in plain English, it hopefully will speak to the ordinary experiences of women and men up and down Scotland and it will hopefully begin to make a difference to the experience of people who have faced death or are facing death and dying in their community. So the Charter is really just a bit of paper, it is a set of statements and on their own they wouldn't make any difference to individuals, but what we hope the Charter will do is that if you are a business you will look at the Charter and think about how can I better support workers or employees who might be experiencing death in their family or in their community. We hope it will make a difference that if you are a child in school or a young person in college that you will be able to look at the Charter and think about what should I be expecting from support. We hope it will make a difference if you are an ordinary member of the community, you might see this Charter in your GPs surgery or in your local library and we hope that it will be able to point you to the support that you need and will be able to describe for you the sort of society that we want to be in Scotland.

So this Charter has a life beyond its publication, we want it to be a description of the sort of society and nation that Scotland needs to become. We do not want a country where people are frightened about talking about death and dying, we want to create a society where rather than walk across the road to avoid the difficult issues of bereavement, people will be present to listen, to support and to give whatever advice somebody might need. This isn't the Charter which belongs to those who created it, it is a Charter for everyone who wants support in their bereavement and everybody who experiences death and dying in today's Scotland.

The film was produced in March 2020 and can be found at www.sad.scot.nhs.uk or <https://vimeo.com/395685686>

For more information visit www.sad.scot.nhs.uk or contact supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk

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