**NHS Education for Scotland**

**Transcript of ‘Responding to the Sudden Death of a Doctor in Training - Case Study: Deanery Administrator’ Film**

So, my role is as an Administrator for a medical specialty training program looking after

trainees over eight years, but sometimes as much as twelve if the take time out of their training.

And although I don't meet many of the trainees in person, I like to support them as best I can through the highs, lows and ever-changing personal circumstances that will inevitably come up

over the years.

I get sent photos of new babies when trainees go on maternity leave and when trainees finally complete their training, I always make a point of sending a personal email congratulating them on their achievement. So, it really feels like more than just an admin role to me.

We experienced the tragic loss of one of our trainees who took their own life. And the shock of this was felt throughout the programme, and in the hospital they worked but also impacted everyone at some level throughout the medical education community. I suppose with any incident like this there may be a feeling of a hierarchy of grief, that only those that knew the trainee well were allowed to grieve our feel the shock and impact of their death. This isn't the case as the loss sent out ripples to all corners, making seemingly easy tasks feel difficult.

Correspondence was sent out acknowledging the tragic news and offering condolences to the trainee’s family, friends and colleagues. It also detailed methods of support open to trainees and contact details for the support. An email was drafted and I was asked to send it out. Unfortunately as can happen with such a sensitive situation some of the trainee’s colleagues and friends were upset with the wording. Words can sometimes be very difficult to process when you're still reeling from such a loss and a few trainees sent emails to me saying how upset they were at the email.

I fed this back to the team but also replied to each of the trainees personally, reassuring them that we all felt the impact of this awful tragedy. I spent the next few weeks, fielding emails

to various groups involved in medical education that would be touched by this awful news.

When a trainee dies in service, our systems have to be updated with the information and

this shouldn't really cause someone to be upset but I found the simple task of changing someone's

status so upsetting, it just felt like at the click of a button that they were no longer in the system, gone, deleted. And the practicalities of putting the post forward as a vacancy also felt difficult, as if just like that, we were replacing them knowing that they could never be replaced.

I hadn't realised how upset I was until I had to go away from my desk, I was crying. I happened to be working from home so I didn't really have anyone to talk to about it although I did mention it to my line manager. I suppose as a mum with children about the same age, it felt very close to home. Thinking about their family and what they're going through is very, it's a human thing to do. So, although I sit in the background anonymously making sure everything runs smoothly, please, don’t underestimate the impact that these events have on people seemingly not involved.

The film was produced in May 2022 and can be found at [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/) or <https://vimeo.com/711597655>

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

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