**NHS Education for Scotland**

**Transcript of ‘Perspective of a Porter Experiencing Bereavement in the Workplace’ Film**

Roy and me were best pals. We started as porters together over 20 years ago, and have always been pals. When I went through the breakup of my relationship, he was there for me, and we lived together for a while. Then when I was getting married, he was going to be the best man at my wedding. He was the obvious choice for me. I was gutted that he couldn't be there. There was no other best man. We were each other's only friends. In fact, during covid the others used to call us hermits, as we enjoyed not socialising with the others.

When he was off sick for a while, I would visit him at home and take him food. On the day he died at home, all the porters got a message from the boss to say he was being brought in. It was really kind of him to warn us, because it would be us who would have to take him to the mortuary. I was on a day off that day, so my boss phoned me himself to tell me. I was shocked and totally disbelieving. I immediately spoke with his wife, it was then it started to feel real. I messaged my wife who was working at the hospital at the time to tell her. I was with the children, and trying to keep it together for them; it was hard. However, her boss let her come home to be with me.

Roy was well known in the hospital; he was a larger-than-life guy. Everybody was devastated and shocked by the news. I got a phone call from my boss; just a supportive call really, to say I could take the next day off and not go in. I appreciated that. I went back to work the day after. I thought it might be distracting in a way, and maybe also a blessing, as I would be with my teammates, and that might be comforting. I find it hard to talk about my feelings, but I didn't have to; we just sat quietly together and that was comforting.

That morning though, that was tough, as my first job was to take somebody to the mortuary. Seeing Roy's name on the mortuary fridge door almost broke me. I find it difficult to talk about that. My boss helped me get support from the peer support service and John, our chaplain. Because of that support, I've now trained to be a peer supporter too.

Porters attend all emergencies and have to cope with a lot, like, people who die in incidents like fires or road traffic accidents, they come here to the mortuary and we have to move them. I'll never forget a young child from years ago who died in a fire. I saw the look in the face of the ambulance staff who brought her in, and I knew it was going to be difficult. We took that poor child in and carefully moved them. No one came to us afterwards and asked if we were okay though, we just got on with our day as if nothing had happened, but it had happened, and years later I'm still carrying that devastation.

I think porters, domestics and support services need more support around dealing with grief and bereavement because generally, we're the forgotten ones and people don't always think about what we're coping with too.

The film was produced in October 2023 and can be found at [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk) or <https://vimeo.com/906402467>.

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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