**NHS Education for Scotland**

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

I arrived with my colleague at Jane's, the service user's house, and noticed that the front door was locked, which was out of the ordinary for her. I also noticed her husband's car was in the drive, which meant he would be home, and he always left the door open for the care workers. We heard Jane shouting from the bedroom window, and looked up, and she appeared distressed, and she was saying her husband wasn't answering her.

We contacted the key holder, who arrived, and when we entered the property we noticed Jane's husband, Andy, lying on the floor by the back door. We ran over to him, but it looked like he might have passed away. We were so shocked, and so sad for Jane.

We contacted the emergency services immediately, and reported to our main office. The staff there then contacted social work, to inform them that Andy had died, as he was Jane's main caregiver, and provided all her meals and medication. She was going to need extra care support, as Andy was no longer there to care for her.

The months following were difficult for Jane, who said she no longer wanted to live without her husband. She stopped eating meals and lost a lot of weight in a short period of time. We were all so worried about her. It was hard to see her lose interest in life and just be so sad.

As carers we get to know our clients really well over time. We build relationships with people because we go into their homes every day. We were already sad at losing Andy, and now it looked like we might lose Jane. She didn't want any help or support from anyone. And when her skin integrity started to break down, she refused any changes in her care plan. We had to assist her with her feeding at each visit. We found this to be very difficult, and at times we didn't know what to say to her, or how to help. We started to feel like we were letting her down. I met with her on a number of occasions, and she told me she'd just given up.

We attended four times each day, and chatted to her on a number of different subjects. We made jokes with her, and it was during this time, sitting together, assisting her with meals, that she slowly began to open up to us. She started eating more and more, and she found her smile again. This was a hard situation for everyone involved. However, with determination and consistency in staff,

Jane started to feel better within herself, and no longer wanted to die.

We reflected after a while on what we had learned, and realised three key things: grief has many stages, and you can't rush someone who's grieving; consistency in staff can help; and keeping memories in our heart lasts forever. The pain of losing a loved one never leaves you, but in ensuring someone has time to reflect and deal with the loss in their own way is important.

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/906403199>.

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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