 **NHS Education for Scotland**

**Transcript of ‘NES Bereavement Education Programme 10 year anniversary event – Mark Evans’ conference film clip recording**

**Speaker**: Mark Evans, Head of Service for Spiritual Care and Bereavement Services / Professional Advisor Spiritual Care NHS Lothian / Scottish Government

It seems a lifetime ago since I was first asked to join a national working group looking at bereavement and bereavement support with NHS Scotland. That group went on to write and publish in 2009 Shaping Bereavement Care and we have come such a long way since then.

Interesting in those early days, many within healthcare queried the need for bereavement care and I remember one senior nurse in a board saying, we don't need bereavement care once the patient dies, they’re no longer our problem. One of the big things that we discovered was that many health and social care staff just felt totally unequipped to provide any kind of bereavement care or bereavement support. It was almost a taboo subject. People didn't know what to say and were terrified of saying the wrong thing.

Interestingly, there was a big requirement for education and training therefore it was a joy and a privilege when NES decided to set up this programme and in particular the SAD website. Time and time again when we were looking into bereavement needs, health and social care staff told us they needed a single place to go to find good practice, up to date guidance, legislation and processes.

The Support Around Death website has delivered that to a high standard. It's accessible, it's clear, and it has been a huge support to our health and social care workforce. The education and the training they have provided has also been innovative, creative and indeed cutting edge. I don't think we can underestimate or indeed overestimate the impact that the programme at NES over the last 10 years has had not only on knowledge and skills of our workforce but also on the countless lives which have been touched by bereavement. We are now in a far better place to offer people that appropriate support which is compassionate, person-centered and supportive.

During COVID pandemic we all became acutely aware about how bereavement can negatively affect those who are left behind. The death of a loved one is life shattering. The death of a loved one takes away all our ideas or knowledge of normality and the death of a loved one leaves us feeling alone and abandoned. It is through the simple acts of health and social care staff that remind those who are bereaved that they are still valuable, that their loss does not diminish who they were and their bereavement does not diminish the relationships with those who they loved.

As we look forward to the next 10 years, my hope and my dream is that bereavement care within health and social care will become just a normal routine aspect of the person-centered care we all seek to survive. And I wish NES and all the team every blessing as they go forward and I also give them my thanks.

The film was produced in August 2025 and can be found at <https://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/webinars/previous-webinars/> or <https://vimeo.com/1120116178>

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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