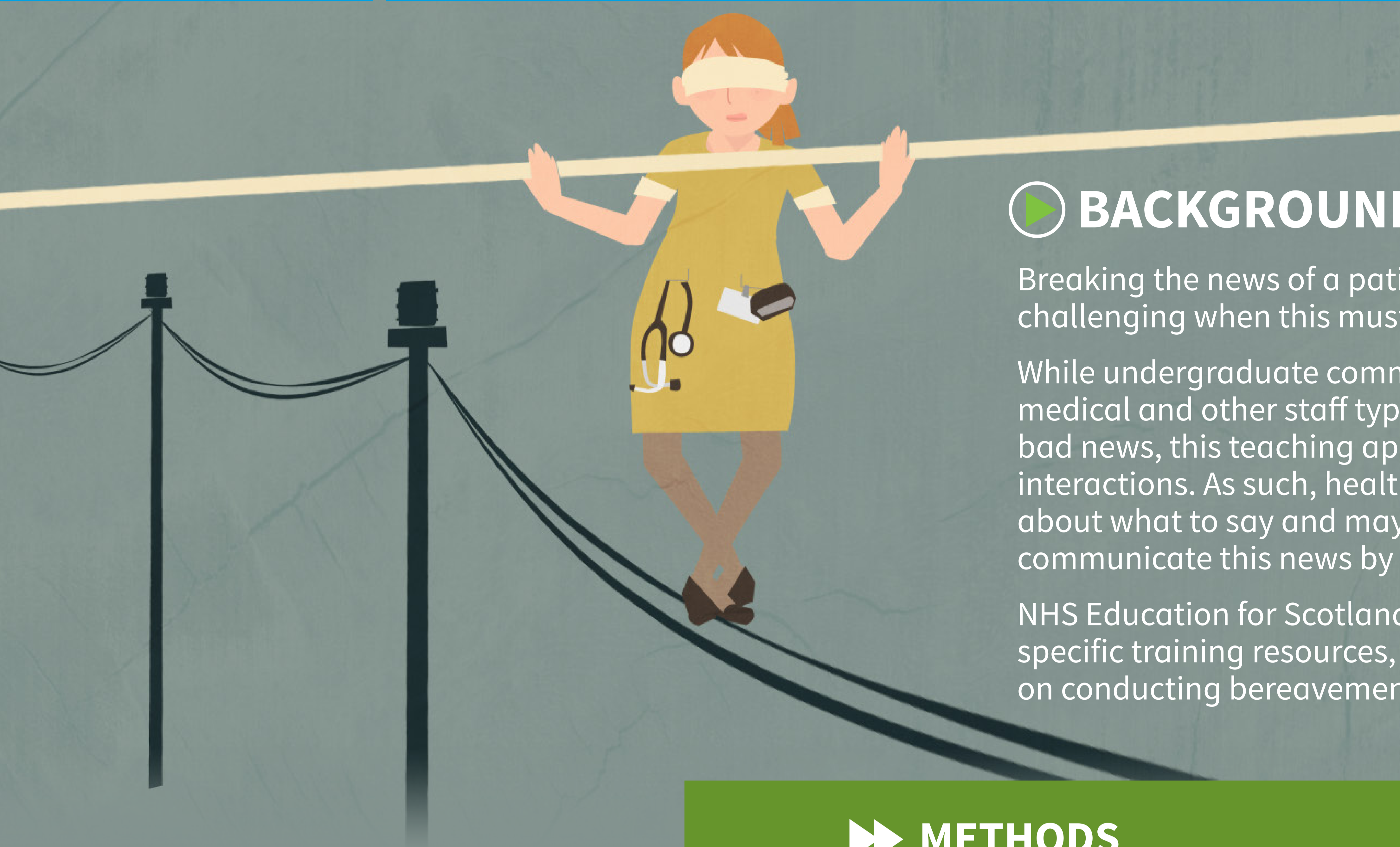


BREAKING THE NEWS OF A DEATH BY TELEPHONE: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO EDUCATION USING ANIMATION

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▶ BACKGROUND

Breaking the news of a patient's death can be made even more challenging when this must be done by telephone.

While undergraduate communication skills training for medical and other staff typically covers the delivery of bad news, this teaching appears to focus on face to face interactions. As such, healthcare professionals can worry about what to say and may even question whether it is right to communicate this news by telephone at all.

NHS Education for Scotland (NES) was unable to identify any specific training resources, for multidisciplinary professionals, on conducting bereavement-related telephone interactions.

▶ METHODS

As part of an educational toolkit of bereavement-related training materials being designed by NES, a new short and engaging animation 'Delivering the News of a Death by Telephone' was developed to support staff of all disciplines in this difficult task.

The film's script was developed with clinical expertise from healthcare professionals with a variety of specialty backgrounds, and the completed resource can be openly accessed on any device (www.sad.scot.nhs.uk).

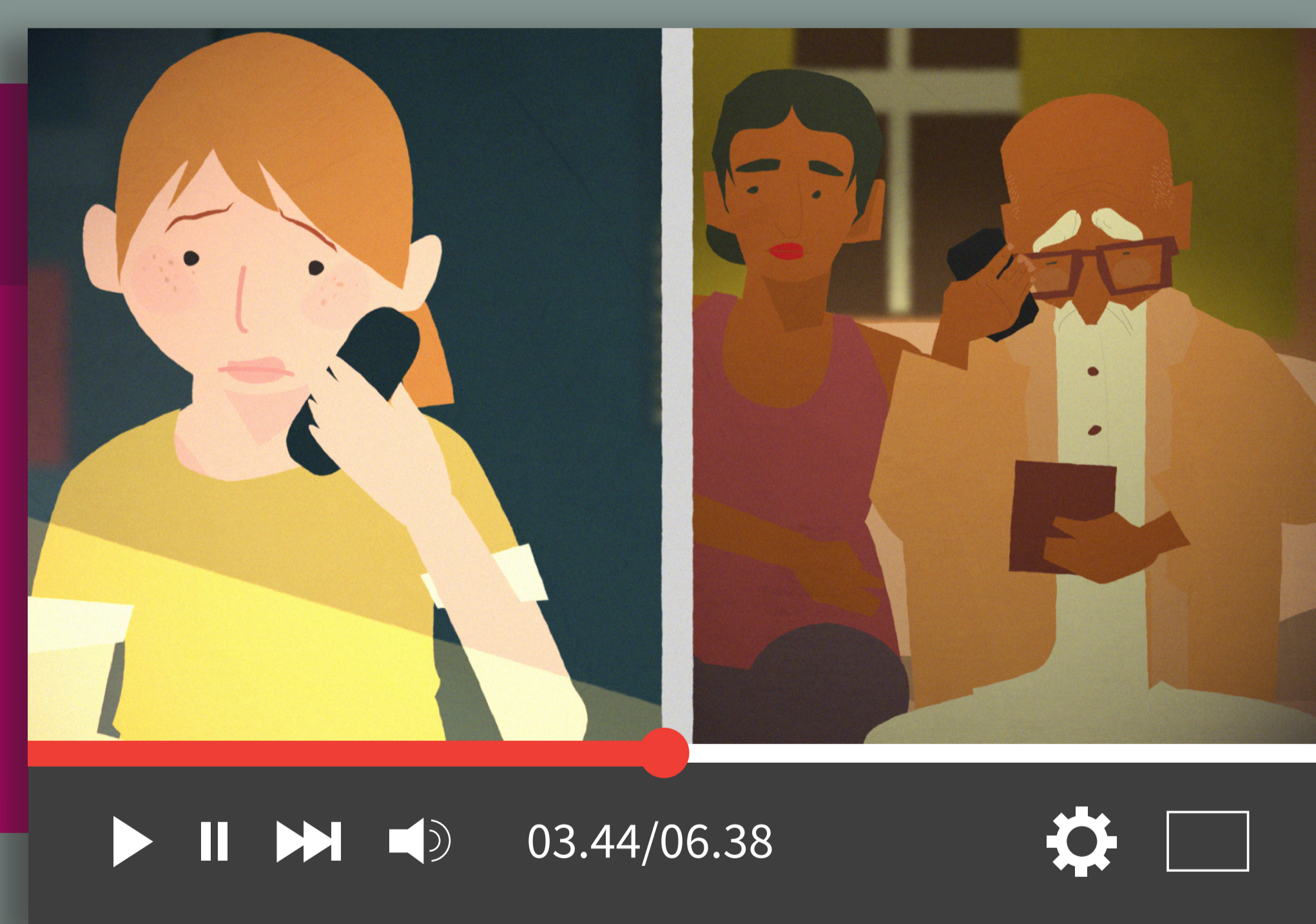
An accompanying downloadable handout is also available which poses questions for individual learners, prompts for group discussion and some suggested key phrases. This encourages healthcare professionals to consider different clinical situations to that which is presented in the film and reflect on how delivering the news of a death by telephone might differ depending upon the particular circumstances. For example, if the person receiving the call is in a public place or if they are alone.



🔊 DISCUSSION

NES' suite of bereavement-related animations has collectively garnered over 26,000 views and continues to receive positive feedback from medical trainers and trainees across Scotland, with usage also identified internationally.

This new film fills a gap in the availability of training resources on a challenging topic that healthcare professionals have reported a lack of confidence in managing.



■ CONCLUSION

Video-based educational materials are becoming an increasingly popular and innovative learning tool. To our knowledge this will be the first online, freely accessible animated teaching resource for healthcare professionals in the UK on the topic of breaking the news of a death over the telephone.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

✉ supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk

🌐 www.sad.scot.nhs.uk

🐦 [@NES_Bereavement](https://twitter.com/NES_Bereavement)

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