

My name is Ken Donaldson, I'm Medical Director in NHS Dumfries and Galloway and also Associate Postgraduate Dean for Grief and Bereavement at NHS Education for Scotland.

Ok, so the title of the workshop is Realism, Reflection and Resilience and really that's based on the fact that over the last ten to fifteen years we've noticed quite a change in the demography of patients that present at the front door of the hospital, the complexity, and at the same time we've seen a real reduction in the workforce. And that's led to a number of factors, but the one that we're focussing on is that quite often patients who are perhaps elderly, reaching the end of their life, instead of having that realistic conversation, it is more often that they'll get some tests done, treatment, that can prolong life, maybe just for days or weeks. But ultimately what we can find is that often when they die, the bereavement for families can be quite hard because they recognise that their loved one was actually dying all the time they were in hospital and they would have preferred to have them at home, or have more conversations with their loved one that they've not been able to have.

So that's one aspect, and the other aspect, is for a clinician working in that environment, it can be quite hard to be dealing with that on a day to day basis and so the resilience aspect is how do we work our wellbeing as clinicians and one fact we will talk about today is how we reflect as teams together; not just discussing the clinical care but also the emotions around it, and asking questions like whose needs were being met, and whose voice was heard, and what does this, kind of, say about me? And these questions can open up a different conversation when we're reviewing a patient's clinical care, that help us learn to ensure that these things don't happen maybe in the future.

So, what I'd like to think is, if we can get teams who have time to reflect well then that will help them learn and perhaps do things differently in the future that would mean that the patients who are reaching end of life will get a realistic conversation and will hopefully die in a place of their choosing, with their family around them, and that will help their subsequent bereavement of that family. But also, if we have teams working in this way and reflecting and discussing the emotional aspects, it does. There's good evidence to show that will help their wellbeing and improve their resilience to work in this, kind of, heavy, busy environment.

So, I think something interesting that came from this morning's session is that we still aren't very good in society at talking about death and therefore bereavement can be something that feels a little bit hidden at times and sometimes people go through difficult bereavements and have nobody to talk to. And I guess part of what we'd like to achieve through this conference, is yes, looking at healthcare professionals and talking about

bereavement more with them, but ultimately opening up that conversation to around the country and society in general and understanding that bereavement is normal and its okay to talk about it, and to support each other, and I think if that comes from healthcare professionals, particularly around the difficult time of death, then that's going to help spread that message.

The film was produced in March 2020 and can be found at [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk) or <https://vimeo.com/392429261>

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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