



Primary Care Bereavement Support

Michelle Guthrie¹, Heather Sloan¹, Jennifer Sommerville², Richard Stafford², Nicola Fullarton³, Suzanne Glennie³

¹*NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Mental Health Improvement Team*, ²*Child Bereavement UK*,

³*Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership Health Improvement*

Background

- ▶ The Primary Care Mental Wellbeing Model is an evidence based approach taken by Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership to consider mental health issues in primary care and develop a range of responses to address these.
- ▶ Bereavement is one of the most distraught and painful human experiences but it is something that everyone encounters at some stage in their lives. Grief can also affect mental health and for those experiencing mental health issues grief can worsen the symptoms. Many individuals experiencing bereavement in the community present frequently in General Practice, as the grief response can at times feel overwhelming leading individuals to think that there is something “medically” wrong with them. More often than not these individuals do not require medical intervention or specialist support.
- ▶ The NHS Greater Glasgow Mental Health Improvement Team, submitted a successful project brief to the Glasgow City Primary Care Mental Wellbeing Model Steering Group with the aim of increasing Primary Care staff knowledge and awareness of bereavement and of services and resources to support patients and staff who are grieving.

Delivery and Content

- ▶ Child Bereavement UK, an experienced bereavement training provider were commissioned to deliver the training
- ▶ Given the sensitivity of the topic area and the unfolding of the pandemic situation, places on the webinar were capped at 16. This was to allow the trainers the capacity to provide a safe and supportive environment for participants
- ▶ The webinar lasted 1.5 hours
- ▶ The NHS GGC Mental Health Improvement Team developed two resources; a poster and staff guide which were promoted and shared at the webinar

Webinar Outcomes

- To increase staff awareness and knowledge of bereavement and grief
- To consider how we can support someone who is grieving
- To increase awareness of support and signposting individuals and families to supports appropriate to their needs.

“Concise, fantastic with lots of real world situations that helps understand the context. Really brilliant.”

“Training was very helpful for my current role. The delivery was brilliant considering it was via zoom - no issues at all. Thanks again.”

Results

- ▶ 16 webinars delivered
- ▶ 124 Primary Care staff attended the training; GP's, Practice Nurses, Community Link Workers, Pharmacists and Financial Inclusion Partners
- ▶ A recorded webinar was made available to staff unable to attend the training
- ▶ A significant number of staff reported an increase in knowledge and understanding of bereavement post training
- ▶ Two resources were developed; "Grief after Bereavement Poster" available in 10 languages and a "Staff Bereavement Guide" both disseminated to over 300 GP practices.

Conclusion

- ▶ As COVID-19 unfolded and the death toll continued to rise, it felt essential now more than ever to be having conversations about death, bereavement and grief. It was important that staff were still able to access opportunities due these unprecedented times to increase their knowledge and understanding of these issues.
- ▶ The webinars offered protected time for staff to process the enormity of the pandemic situation, acquire some knowledge and ultimately give them confidence to be having conversations about bereavement, how to support someone who is grieving and where to signpost those requiring the services of a support organisation.

