 **NHS Education for Scotland**

**Transcript of ‘The Language of Grief: How metaphors can help us to understand and support the grieving process’ conference film clip recording**

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My name's Sarah Turner and I'm a Linguistics Researcher at Coventry University. Since 2016, my research has focused on communication around grief and bereavement, and I'm particularly interested in the way people use metaphor and imagery to express their experiences of bereavement. And I think a lot of the time people might consider metaphor and imagery to be the kind of things that we find more in poetry and literature. But people do use it so often to kind of describe what they're going through and I think it's a really powerful thing to look at to help us to gain a better understanding of their experiences.

In this session, I'll be sharing findings from research I've been involved in where I've been talking

to bereaved parents, along with my colleagues, and this was done over two projects.

So, the first one looked at grief following pregnancy loss and stillbirth, and the second project looked at grief following the death of a child at any age. So, in both projects, we were looking at the ways parents drew on metaphor and symbolism and imagery to help them to communicate their experiences and also how these metaphors provided insights into what they were going through. We also looked at what parents considered to be effective care and communication following a death.

So, in this session, I'll be sharing examples of some of the language used by parents to talk about their experience, how they perceived the care and communication that they received, and also the relationships that we can draw between these two elements.

So, in terms of the key learning points, I would say that effective care and communication following a bereavement is that which takes bereaved people's experiences into account and coheres with them.

And so the main thing that I'll be suggesting is that being sensitive to the language, including the metaphors used by the bereaved, can provide really important insights into this experience.

Metaphors can clue us into where a bereaved person is at, and this can help us to provide effective,

compassionate support that meets them where they are. And that's something that we'll be exploring a little bit more in this talk.

The film was produced in September 2024 and can be found at <https://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/conference/> or <https://vimeo.com/1013469869>

For more information visit [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk) or contact supportarounddeath@nes.scot.nhs.uk

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