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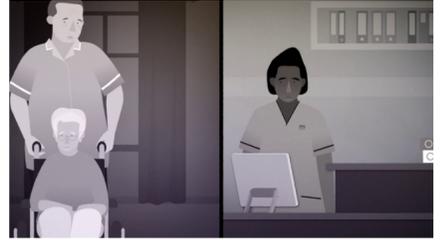
## Introduction

Health and social care staff may, during their working life, experience the death of a peer or colleague. Knowing what to say and do in these circumstances to provide support to ourselves and others can be challenging and naturally people may feel apprehensive.



## Background

The NHS Education for Scotland (NES) Bereavement Education Programme, founded in 2013, works to deliver educational solutions to support health and social care staff have increased feelings of preparedness and confidence in handling bereavement-related situations that they encounter in the course of their work. Building on the experience of developing resources to support staff interact with those who are bereaved following the death of a patient or client, this project saw the focus move to the situation of the death of a colleague.

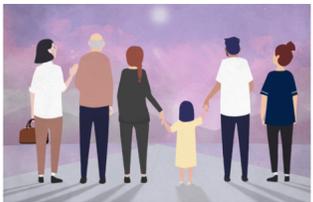


## Educational resource development

A suite of five e-Learning modules and a range of film resources were developed in collaboration with staff who had lived experience of the death of a colleague. These learner-centred materials cover aspects of responding to a death, drawing both on current guidance (to support a person-centred approach which is educationally evidence informed), as well as incorporating real-life case studies (which can be used for reflection and discussion).

### Module 1: An introduction to grief and bereavement

This focuses on a general understanding of grief and bereavement experiences.



### Module 2: Sharing the news

This focuses on how to share the news of a person's death, for those who may be involved in this task within the workplace.



### Module 3: Consideration for employers and managers

This focuses on employers and managers, as they respond and navigate through the period following the death of a colleague.



### Module 4: Support and wellbeing

This focuses on supporting our own wellbeing and those around us when experiencing the death of a colleague.



### Module 5: Memorialising and remembering

This focuses on ways to memorialise and remember a person; activities which can help to support and comfort colleagues and families who are bereaved.



## Course development

Building on this work, the NHS Fife Spiritual Care Department has developed a pilot in-person bereavement in the workplace course which utilises these asynchronous learning materials in a synchronous learning initiative, as part of a flipped classroom approach. Over the course of four sessions, staff are invited to explore the topics in more detail, with opportunities for simulated practice and facilitated individual and small group reflection using a values-based approach. This course is designed to enhance the readiness of health and social care staff, teams and line managers in responding to the death of a colleague in a compassionate and supportive manner. It mirrors the topics covered in the NES learning modules.

## Outcomes

- Cohort one of this course has seen staff representation from across health and social care, including the areas of nursing, allied health professionals, pharmacy, care homes and spiritual care.
- Evaluation is ongoing, however initial feedback regarding content and delivery of the programme has been very positive. Following a full review of delegate feedback data there is a plan to recruit cohort two to the course in early 2025.
- Anecdotal evidence from participants has suggested that the establishment of a bereavement support group for staff would provide a welcomed space for people to connect with one another.

*"This course provided an opportunity to reframe and reflect on how I might respond to bereavement in the workplace in an environment that felt supportive".*

*"I have always felt anxious about what I would do if someone on my team dies. Having attended the bereavement in the workplace training, I now feel better prepared to support my colleagues at the most difficult of times"*

## Final thought

Experiencing the death of a colleague is a situation we would all hope not to encounter. However, there is benefit in undertaking learning on this subject in a pro-active manner in case one was to be involved in responding to the death of a member of staff in the future. Through effective collaborative work across two NHS Boards, evidence-based learning resources have been developed and a course piloted, intelligence from which can be shared and used by others across Scotland, and potentially beyond.