**NHS Education for Scotland**

**Talking about Bereavement Podcast Series – Transcript of ‘Hearing their voice and giving them choice: Working with children and young people’ Podcast**

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**LI:** Hello and welcome to the Talking About Bereavement podcast, which is brought to you by the Bereavement Education Programme in NHS Education for Scotland. We are Lynne Innes and Clare Tucker, who are part of the education team. In these podcasts, we're going to talk about bereavement with our guests who will be sharing and reflecting on some of the work and learning they're involved in as they talk about bereavement.

**CT:** Hi, and welcome to this episode of the podcast. We are really pleased to introduce our guests today, Donna Hastings and Sally Paul. Donna is the Head of Patient and Family Support at St Columba's Hospice Care in Edinburgh. She has a wealth of experience in child bereavement, is a trained facilitator and has presented at many conferences. Dr Sally Paul is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow where she teaches on the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in social work. Before coming to the university, she was a palliative care social worker with a responsibility for coordinating the children's bereavement service. So welcome Donna and Sally. I wonder perhaps if I come to Donna first. I've just given a very brief overview there of, of some of your background. Perhaps you'd like to expand on that introduction and tell us a little bit more about yourself and how you've got to where you've got to in terms of your life and work.

**DH:** Lovely. Thanks Clare, good morning, it's lovely to be here and to be doing this with Sally. My interest in particularly childhood bereavement stems from my own personal experience. My dad had cancer when I was 15 and he died when I was 21. And, and by, you know, 21, you know, some people will class that as being an adult but actually for the majority of my childhood years, teenage years particularly, I lived with my dad going through his cancer journey and how that impacted myself and my family. And from there I really just wanted to be an advocate for children and young people, to give them a voice, to advocate for them to be included when somebody has a diagnosis of a terminal illness or when they have been bereaved. And that's really where, where my journey with childhood bereavement started. And then career wise, I was really fortunate to, to begin at the charity Richmond's Hope and was employed there first as a Bereavement Support Worker, eventually moving to become the Bereavement Coordinator and spent 16 amazing years there working, supporting, developing therapeutic play activities for children and young people that gave them a space for them to really tell their story in the context of their family. What happened during the time at Richmond's Hope though was that what we identified was probably about a third of young people we were seeing had had somebody that had died from a terminal, terminal illness and they hadn't often had the opportunity to, to say goodbye to the person. They weren't included until after and that itself brings some complexities and, and grief for children and young people. And the opportunity came to come to St Columbus Hospice care to set up a child and family service with a focus particularly on pre-bereavement support. So that you know, that advocacy I was talking about and, and giving children voice and choice and being included was then going to be available here. And it's still so limited, certainly across Edinburgh and the, the Lothians with pre-bereavement support that it's wonderful to be able to, to be here and, and set that up so that, that's a long-winded way of, of giving my experience. But, but really what drives my passion for childhood bereavement.

**CT:** Thanks, Donna. You've done such an amazing wealth of work there and you know, obviously really sorry to hear about the situation that you experienced as a, as a teenager. I'm sure we'll come back to pick up some of the, the things that you've discussed there. But perhaps first, I can just come to you, Sally, to share a little bit more about your work experience and how you've got to where you've got to today before we, we go further.

**SP:**  Thanks, Clare and Lynne, and thanks for having me today. Thanks also to Donna for inviting me to share this space with her and, and sharing her story there. I know how much experience she has. So it's always interesting to, to hear that again and the, the different, the path that you've taken. So for me, I'm a social worker and I've always had a commitment to working with children and young people and kind of fostering positive spaces for those children and young people to, to be in and to exist. And very early on in my training actually, I was asked to work with a mum who was dying of liver disease and look at kind of guardianship for their child. And at that time it was seen as, you know, Sally’s a social work student, this is really difficult stuff. Should we be getting a social work student to, to do this? And the work that went on around that time was really, really positive, but generated lots of, of thoughts, I guess in me in terms of how we engage the social work profession in these, these kind of types of conversations and how we work with the families. And I guess then throughout my career working with children and young people, just aware of the, of both, both the prominence of loss that features in people's lives, but also that some of the young people that I was working within the care system, had often had very difficult traumatic bereavements and that prompted me to learn more. And so I got a post at Strathcarron Hospice actually, which was to help set up the children's bereavement service and with a lady called Kirsty Freeland was involved in coordinating that for, for some time. And I guess what I was aware of that there hadn't been a bereavement service in that community before. And so we started to receive quite a lot of calls for advice from the community about how do we support this child and some of them are from teachers. What do we do? What do we say can, can, can this person come to see you? So quite often we found we were pushing back a little bit and thinking about that person's role in actually working with the young person rather than us just taking that, that referral. And that kind of led me to my doctoral research about thinking how we work proactively between the hospice and the schools in supporting children and young people's experiences of death and bereavement. And I've now been at the university for 10 years and kind of those research experiences have kind of underpinned my work in kind of really thinking about how young people experience death and what is the roles of the wider community in supporting those experiences. And it's been a really, you know, a real privilege to kind of do that kind of more academic work, working closely with people like Donna and Rebecca Patterson at Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief, and really thinking about how that knowledge then can shape or influence what we do, which I guess that's why we're here so.

**LI:** Thank you, Sally, thank you both for sharing what’s kind of brought you into this work. And, and I suppose, Donna, I was reflecting on you saying about, you know, your own experience of bereavement with your, your dad. And what I was noticing as you were saying, it was I, I've obviously hosted quite a few of these podcasts now, that a lot of people that I have interviewed for the podcast have said, you know, have come with similar stories of what's motivated them to do the work that they do. And it's shaped by their own experience of, of loss or bereavement. And so, yeah, I was noticing that as you were speaking. Also, Sally, in terms of what you were saying about, and I know you've both done some work around schools and that's one of the things we're, we're hoping to talk about today. And you were talking about teachers getting in touch with you to say, can, can you see these people too and that, I presume that was because there was, they, they didn't know where else to direct people because there, there probably aren't lots of services. And so I suppose I wondered if you would, if you'd both like to kind of share a bit about the, the, the schools work that you've been doing that you're currently engaged in to start with, if that, if that was okay.

**DH:** Thanks, Lynne. So currently we are working on a Scotland wide project, we’re starting very small. We've got a pilot going and we've got ethics from Strathclyde University. And really what we're, we're doing is a Bereavement Charter Mark for schools and trying to encourage schools to get involved in just being proactive around bereavement, loss, change, grief. You know, some schools are incredible and they have policies in place and they, they are compassionate schools. But there's still lots of schools who will respond in crisis. And what we're really hoping to do is encourage schools to empower them to really take ownership around the issue of bereavement because it touches everybody. And one of the, the special things I think about the pilot is when we think about bereavement in childhood and we think about schools often we go to okay well, should all school staff have training in understanding childhood bereavement. And, you know, I think that that's absolutely one thing. And it can support the staff in school to be able to understand how children do grieve and the, the impact that a bereavement can have on them. But actually the, the wider part of the, the pilot is around just compassionate school communities and that's around recognising that schools are also workplaces for all of the adults there and that they too can be bereaved themselves. And so rather than just thinking about how do schools support children and young people facing bereavement or when they're bereaved, we're actually including the, the staff, the adults in that as well. And thinking just about actually, how does bereavement impact people in school. And the, the project is, you know, it's, it's not onerous at all. There are six criteria that schools can work towards to initially get the, the charter mark. They have to meet four of the criteria. And so one of those, for instance, could be that each class in school, it’s focused on primary schools, we do hope to extend that to, to secondary schools, but it's focused on primary schools and an activity would be that every class maybe reads a story book that is relating to, to loss, change, bereavement and that there's an accompanying activity that goes alongside that but it's age appropriate. So we would have it right from Primary 1 up to Primary 7, and every year as children move through school, they would have a different storybook with a different activity. So it's building on their understanding of change, loss and bereavement. And so by the time they are ready to leave P7 and move on to high school, which will also support that transition, children will have more knowledge and understanding around bereavement. So if they're facing it themselves or they're impacted by bereavement, or they can be supportive of their peers because they will have more understanding. So the, the Charter Mark is really based on the Bereavement Charter for Adults and Children in Scotland. So for people that aren't aware, the Charter has 13 statements that really looks at what best bereavement support should look like for everybody you know there, there's a universal need that people have when they're bereaved. So from information, signposting, and then knowing, you know, where they can access support if people need it. And there's also accompanying guidance with the, the Charter. So the, the pilot mark for schools is really a way for, for schools to look at how does bereavement impact their school, how can they respond, how can they support both students and staff. And it's really empowering them to, to take the lead on that without anybody parachuting in, and you know, responding when there is that crisis. We, we really want to empower schools to be able to, to take the lead for this and that the Charter Mark will have to be applied for every three years because we know that staff obviously can come and go, but it very much keeps it live, and it keeps it current. It's not we're, we're so keen it's not a tick box exercise. So I mean that that's really what, what the project has just now. I don’t know, Sally, do you want to add some more?

**SP:**  Yeah, I think some of the things that have kind of guided how this has been done is really to draw awareness of the prevalence of childhood bereavement. You know, because we often think that there's no one, no one I know it's, it's not in my classroom, for example. But actually we do know that it's much higher than, than we think. Some of the research that we've done here at Strathclyde has shown that, you know, by the age of eight over half of children experienced a bereavement and even that's thought to be an underestimate. So this, it's very much part of school life, of family life, even though we might not acknowledge that. So the Charter Mark is trying to, to bring attention to that. But also it was really important as Donna said that it was kind of a bottoms up approach rather than a top-down approach. So supporting schools through the criteria to think about, well, actually what are they comfortable with, what they could, what can they do with the time that they've got and the experience they've got or where do they need to get more training and what works for them. Because if, if this feels new for you, if it feels difficult to acknowledge that bereavement in these spaces, then it, it can feel like quite a scary step to take. So actually starting where they're at and working with the strengths that already exist in that school community to, to move forward with the criteria in a way that that is most appropriate.

**DH:** I was just going to come in there at the back of Sally there, if that's all right and just Sally had touched on that, you know, by eight, half of children will have experienced a bereavement. And we know that from that, that same piece of research Sally, it's yours so correct me if I'm wrong, but by the age of 10, I think it's 62% that will experience a bereavement. And you know, we, we know that the majority of children here in, in Scotland will move to high school, you know, when they're usually 11 or 12. So for primary schools particularly, you know, if we're, we're talking about 62% of children and young people facing a bereavement before the age of 10, then actually they spend such a lot of time in school as well. And so the idea with kind and compassionate aware, bereavement aware schools is that staff and children will be more comfortable talking about bereavement. And that there's also something around, you know, with those statistics, it is, it's more common that it might be a grandparent that dies. You know, so in Scotland, we know that, that one in four children are bereaved of a parent every day. But in those statistics of 62%, it, it would be that, you know, it might be one or both grandparents and people think, well, you know, grandparents death might not impact children as much. However, what we, we also have to consider in there is the, the, the role that grandparents play in, in children's lives. And, and we know that how children grieve is impacted because of the relationship with the person. And you know, we, we also know that there are so many children who might be care experienced where their grandparents are their main carer. So if it is that person that is either facing bereavement or they, they do die, then actually how do we support children who the, the grandparent has been the main carer because that is going to hugely, hugely impact that, the, you know, a child's life. So it, it was just to bring that in as well.

**LI:** Yeah, I suppose it's coming back to I mean, we've done, Clare and I have done some work around this that the kind of the, the, the hierarchy of bereavement that there isn't one really. And that obviously we shouldn't be judging, you know, kind of relationships in, in that way that a grandparent might not impact a child as much as, as a, as a parent or a sibling or, or, or whatever. That was one of the questions I was going to ask you what was the type of bereavement was, did you, had you defined the type of bereavement when you said like 62% of children will be bereaved but it sounds like you have. I suppose I was also wondering about you said that it was quite a small project to start with and I wondered if you had had anything, you know what, what were you, what you finding from that kind of project already? Are there any findings that you can share or are you too early in the process?

**DH:** So the initial pilot is for ten schools and we, we're at nine.

**LI:** Oh right**.**

**DH:** So that's incredible. And there are, I think five schools currently with their Charter Mark. And I think for us, just what is great is that actually schools are, you know, there's a real willingness they recognise actually that, you know, this, this could be something that we can be doing across our school community. And like I touched on before, it's, it's not onerous, but it, it brings bereavement, it brings that onto the agenda. And, you know, and the, the people that are doing it so far are saying, you know, we were already doing some of this, you know, that there's some incredible work going on in, in schools with, with nurture, seasons for growth, you know that there's lots of different work that's already happening in schools. I think like Sally had touched on, we're saying actually we can take this and just build on this, that, you know, it's achievable. So I mean, the, the early signs are feedback from people is that, you know, it, it is easy enough to do. I mean, a lot of schools are, are having small working groups that are, are working on this. And it also includes, you know, children and young people, you know, working towards a local school Charter. It's about letting families know why we might be applying for the Bereavement Charter Mark, what does that mean to our school? You know, so it's, it's just kind of raising awareness and bringing bereavement really to the table. I think often what happens with bereavement is until you're in it, until it's impacting you, then you know, you're, you're going to look for supports around. But otherwise, sometimes I think you know, you, you can still have people thinking, well, you know, is, is that my role? What, what if I get it wrong? What if I say the wrong thing? What if I make it worse? And actually, just by, by bringing the, the topic of bereavement into school means that we're able to, to have these conversations more widely.

**LI:** Yeah.Clare, I wonder if you want to come in.

**CT:** Yeah, thanks. Donna I was really struck with what you said at the beginning about children not having the opportunity to say goodbye for a, a situation where someone's perhaps expected to or thought to be going to die. And I think you said, I wrote down the phrase giving children a voice and choice. It just, it's really struck with me. I was thinking for any of the conversations you've had with schools where they've been less keen perhaps to engage with your activities, I wondered if you could share anything a little bit, if you have encountered schools or school communities who are perhaps a little bit more concerned or reluctant to engage, you know, what if there's anything behind that and what we can learn from that. I think historically people do talk a little bit about, you know, death and bereavement being taboo, a sort of topic across society. And I suppose I just wondered if that was something that you encountered in the sort of children's context and whether you're still coming into contact with people who are perhaps fearful of raising a topic which might upset people. And obviously, you know, there's huge benefits in doing that. But if, I suppose the question, yeah, if you, if you've experienced any sort of pushback or reluctance, and if so, what's been behind that?

**DH:** Yeah, I, I think I'll, I'll say a little bit and then maybe Sally, you could come in as well from, from your experience. I think, you know, like I said that there are some schools that are, are doing this wonderfully. I think often, sometimes when we're met with resistance, it is for the reasons that, you know, schools wonder, you know, actually is it our place, you know, and you know, should these conversations maybe be happening at home. Are there maybe specialist services that children can be referred to and, and sometimes, yes, absolutely children do need that. You know, where we're talking about prevalence in, in childhood bereavement, but not every child is going to need a referral for specialist bereavement support. And, and part of and you know, supporting schools to become bereavement aware schools is that they will, they've got the resource in there. They've got caring staff that can listen and can talk to children. And, you know, we, we'd already touched on that children, you know, they, they spend such a lot of their time there. You know, we talk about, you know, it's the workplace for the adults, it's a workplace for children and you know, they, they should be able to be supported in an environment where they spend so much of their time. And I think so that, so there is a question about is it our role or is it a family's role. But I think often, not all the time, so, you know, I'm, I'm not saying it's the case all the time, but I think often because we all have our own individual personal experience of bereavement that can impact, you know, how that's received in school. And, you know, I think for the Charter Mark, what we recognise is that we really need the almost senior leadership team in the school to, to buy into this so that they're, they're able to invest in it. But often it can be because of people's own experience that there's a reluctance there to, to bring that. And they, they worry about like opening up a can of worms. And, you know, how can we best support this. But actually by embarking on the Charter Mark, that that's going to help you and your school community think about and address those things so that, you know, it is a place where it feels safe, where both children and staff can feel supported. Sally, do you want to add more?

**SP:** Yeah. I think one of the things we're aware of in this pilot is that, you know, we're most likely to get schools engaged in this process because we're not, we're not going out and actively targeting specific schools necessarily. So we're most likely to get schools who are already thinking about this and perhaps already doing things and we've actually school communities who aren't and that they're the ones as well that we want, want to reach. So we're really aware of that. And certainly in the research that I've done in the past, I've, I've, I've also had had luck in engaging with schools where they were doing some really excellent work already, or perhaps someone in their community was ill or had died and they were thinking about what, what can we do next? And that then opened the door to think about, you know, what is the role of the school here and, and what can we do? I guess when I was listening to Donna talk about support, I think what, what the Bereavement Charter does well is it's, it's not thinking about support that is individualised necessarily. Support isn't about sitting one to one with the children only. It's about thinking about children and teachers in within the wider community and kind of that's the social support. What does the social environment look like to support death and bereavement? And that that can look, you know, it's, it's very broad. So support might look like skipping a bit of a book because it deals with death and loss, you know, actually reading that passage because that teaches us that it's okay, you know, and actually there might be sad bits of the story, but let's not avoid it completely. It might be thinking about how we, peers can be involved if a child returns to school because that's who the child spends most of their time with. So is it better to, to give focus to that rather than just focusing on the individual necessarily? And so, I think that's what the Bereavement Charter is also trying to do is to move away from this one-on-one and think about the wider community and supporting or enhancing wellness, I guess, when someone is experiencing grief.

**LI:** Thank you, thank you both for, for talking about that. If you're, if you're okay, I'm going to kind of move us just to a slightly different topic, which is I suppose some of the stuff that you've, you've been involved in relates a bit to health inequalities around bereavement. And some of that makes very kind of interesting reading. And I wonder how much that connects into the school's kind of bereavement work that you're doing as well. But I wondered if you wanted to talk a wee bit about health inequalities around bereavement and how that impacts child bereavement as well, if that was okay.

**SP:** Yeah So we know that bereavement doesn't impact people equally, you know, in terms of the frequency with bereavement might occur or I guess the prevalence of bereavement in certain communities. And in the prevalence study, what we found was that there was a link with the experience of bereavement and socioeconomic status so that families that were from a lower social economic status were more likely to, there was a greater risk of experiencing the death of a parent or a sibling. And we didn't go into the details of why that might necessarily be, but what that shows us is that there is an unequal experience. And certainly if we look back to COVID and what the data told us about that is that people were more likely to die if they lived in areas of deprivation. And there was a higher prevalence of, of death in marginalised communities, BME communities. So when we're thinking about support, we have to be aware of that inequality. For example, with young offenders, there's some research again done, done from Strathclyde, Nina Vaswani who found that the young men living in Polmont Young Offenders Institute had more bereavement experiences and more experience of traumatic bereavement. So multiple and traumatic loss, which again suggests a kind of link between those earlier experiences and offending behaviour. So it's really again, and that's why, why the schools work is important because schools are in the community. So what does that community look, look like. How, how does death feature in those community. What are the types of death that people experience. And, and I guess schools is one way at looking at that kind of more population perspective and trying to think about equity in support rather than just the lucky few who are kind of referred to bereavement services. Does that answer your question, Lynne?

**LI:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, it's really interesting actually in the work that that we've looked at was, was kind of, I suppose quite, it's quite stark actually. And, and, and reading that, I suppose maybe not having thought about it before, but it was quite stark reading it. And I suppose a lot of that links also to the early years work, doesn't it? That's kind of I mean, we maybe don't want to have conversations with very young children about, about death and bereavement, but, but it's starting that conversation when it's appropriate to start the conversation and to maybe support - will there be less people go on to kind of be in young offenders institutions or prisons in later life. And I know that's a, a huge step and I'm not saying that is the case, but, but is there, is there, is there an association there. I, I suppose one of the questions I, because I work in, in the kind of, this sphere of wellbeing I'm always kind of interested in asking my guests on the podcast how they look after their own wellbeing. Because often people like yourselves are dealing with death, dying and bereavement on a kind of daily basis in your, in your work. And so how, how do you, how do you keep well in your own roles for yourselves?

**DH:** So good, good supervision I think is, you know, is so helpful. I, I think very honest and say that when I started in this, this work way back in 2003, you know, somebody would ask that question and I would say, well, do you know, it's, it's not about me, it's about the children, it's about the young people. And I think if I skip forward to now, I think that that was ridiculous to say that, you know, of course it is all about the children and young people, you know, because that's who I was supporting at the time. But I'm, I'm a really firm believer in you, you need to be able to feel, you know, if, if you go in to do an assessment with a child or young person and you, you know, you almost, it's another six year old, it's another child whose parent has died by cancer. You know, if, if you go in thinking that they're all, all the same, or, you know, you've maybe heard it before or you don't feel, you know, then actually you, you shouldn't be doing your job because you know, the, the, there is something about this. You, you need to feel, and this is just my own personal opinion and my experience, but I, I think it, it is about them. And you need to recognise that because otherwise you wouldn't be any good to them. But if you don't allow yourself to feel, you know, at, at some point, absolutely, you know, when you've been working in, in death and, and bereavement for over 20 years, of course it's going to seep into your bones at, at, at some level, you know. And so, you know, that I, I do believe that if, if you stop feeling that, you know, if, if you know, a, a child is talking about their experience and it is so raw for them, you know, and sometimes, you know, for, for me there, there are those moments that will just catch, you know, and almost, you can feel that, that lump in your throat, you know, and, and you can feel the rawness of their pain for them. But, but know that sitting alongside them, you, you can hear them and you can give them space to, to, to share what they want to share, to, to support them in all of that, to give them that voice and, and, and choice that we talked about, you know, about how they, they manage their grief or there is something about that you do need to feel that. So when you're feeling that, good supervision comes hand in hand. I think having great colleagues around you but for me, it's absolutely what fills my cup, what, what fills my soul, that replenishes that. And for me, that's, that's definitely my family. You know, when you, you go home at the end of the day or, you know, on your weekends, your, your, your time off work is about filling it with, with people that absolutely just fill, fill my soul. And, and that makes all the difference. You know, and I could, can give you all the stuff like, you know, yoga or walks and, and all of those things, because different things work for different people. But for me, it's my people that, that absolutely help that so.

**LI:** Okay, okay, thank you. I like the need to be able to feel, you know, it's pretty obvious that's kind of but, but sometimes I've noticed that that's hard for folks sometimes to keep feeling. And, and I'm a, you know, firm believer in supervision or reflective practice, you know, in a, in a kind of formal way to support people. So yeah, absolutely supervision. But then also recognising that it's more than that too. It's about, it's about whatever your soul work is. And you said yours is your family and, but it might, you know, it might have been yoga retreats every week or whatever. It's whatever isn't it that, that, that supports us. What about you, Sally? Do you keep well at work?

**SP:** Yeah, it's a good question because obviously my work's different now. I don't kind of do direct practice, I guess and bereavement, but I do research in this area. And I guess for me, that was one of the things that I did find helped me, you know, and probably which kind of pushed me a little bit towards this, this career trajectory was that when things used to happen or if I felt heavy because of the day that I'd had, you know, listening and that actually reading fiction or nonfiction was a way that helped me kind of make sense and, and process what was going on for me and just kind of makes sense of my work. So very much that was a way of looking after myself within that setting. And also now it's just that that opportunity for, for standing back and reflecting and, and critically reflecting on, on what I've been dealing with and what I've been thinking about. But similar to Donna, I'd also say my family, you know, that is completely different headspace. Although I say that it's quite timely in that yesterday my daughter's gerbil died and, and thinking about how loss features in kids, kids lives. I wasn't particularly attached to that gerbil. In fact, it, it, I can't make that face in a podcast, but the rodents aren’t, aren’t kind of my cup of tea. And so I didn't really have an attachment to it, but she did. And when she came back from a sleepover, we had to kind of tell her about Bella Black's, little Bella Black had died. And me and my husband were very much of this, this gerbil should go in kind of the waste recycling. But that's not what my daughter wanted to do. She wanted to have a proper burial and she wanted to make a gravestone. And it was, I had to pause because even though I talk about this stuff and I think about how we engage with children about this issues, the, the parent in me that was busy and wanted to get her to bed on time and get to the bath was like, no, should we just do this, this, but actually making time to have this conversation and listen to her and give her an agency around what we did with the gerbil that was important to her. It was the right thing to do. But also was the hard thing to do as you've got your juggling all these different things. So I guess I've been reflecting a little bit about that in this conversation and thinking about the challenges to kind of what we know are really good, good practices, whether that's in families or schools, but actually how real life kind of intersects with that and, and takes you off in different paths and that's okay. But just being able to think about that and, feels important for certainly for myself care.

**LI:** Thank you for sharing that. I was thinking about my, my little granddaughter has got goldfish, not goldfish, they're all different types of fish. And one of them died and she was very sad about it. And I was probably maybe similar to you when she phoned us to tell us that I maybe wasn't as empathetic as, as she might have liked us to have been. So something to reflect on there. Thank you for sharing that. We've just got a couple of minutes left on the podcast. I just wonder if there's any kind of final messages that you wanted to share. And Clare, sorry, I noticed you might have wanted to come in there. Was there something you wanted to say?

**CT:** Yeah, no similar lines really, I think Lynne and also I just wondered if there were any school communities listening who might be interested in getting involved if there's still an opportunity for them to do so.

**DH:** Yeah, absolutely. Thanks for that, Clare.Although that the pilot, you know, we, we'd said that we would, would try and get 10 schools engaged, you know, like I said to you, we’ve, we've got 9. But, but we're meeting with, you know, like East Lothian, we've got meetings at Tayside, meetings across in Glasgow that there's, it's actually, and, and that's what we're really hoping, you know, when we talk about schools really taking the lead on this, we, we hope that it's going to be a resource that's going to be able to, to be easily used by, by everybody and really want people to, to get on board with it. And we, we would encourage anybody that was interested, you know, that there's a flyer, there's a resource page, if you go to Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief, there's a whole section on the Bereavement Charter and the Charter Mark for, for schools and also for workplaces. So anybody that's at all interested, please, please reach out because the, I think it's word of mouth. That's what we're really hoping for, Sally, isn't it?That you know this, things like the podcast today is going to raise awareness and the more that we can talk about this, hopefully word of mouth will encourage different schools to, to join in the initiative.

**LI:** Thank you. Sally.

**SP:** So I was just going to say I'm really glad you brought attention to the website because there's lots of different resources on there that have been developed across Scotland. For example, the Whole School's Approach to Bereavement, which was developed over in Glasgow by different agencies there. There's a death and grief education programme that was developed through some of my work. We've also got the How to Guide for Compassionate Schools, which was developed by a group Donna and I are both part of, that brings together practitioners and researchers across Europe looking at how we can share knowledge about how to, to make or to develop schools that are more compassionate around death and bereavement. So yeah, I would encourage people to go onto that website and just check it out and if there's anything that's of interest to you, you know, talk to someone about it and think about what you might be able to do with it…

**LI:** Okay.

**SP:** I guess in terms of lasting messages…

**LI:** Yeah, yeah.

**SP:** …can I just…

**LI:** Yeah, absolutely.

**SP** …yeah, I guess for me it's just, you know, it's recognising that bereavement impacts us all at some point in our life and we, we can't miss children from that. So we need to think about the spaces where children are in and think about how we make those supportive environments for children so that they're not excluded from information and education that, that is really information and education for life.

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**LI:** Yeah, yeah, I think that's really important, Sally, that this is information and education for life, isn't it? You know, it, it's helpful just now, but it's, it's, it's actually about it's for the long term as well. So thank you both very much for joining us this morning and agreeing to being on podcast, been really interesting talking to you and hearing about the work that you've, that you're currently involved in, but also the work that you've been involved in. So thank you very much to you both.

**DH:** Thank you.

**SP:** Thank you.

**LI:** If you would like to find out more about the Bereavement Education podcast or listen to more episodes, you can do so on Podbean or Spotify, just search Talking about Bereavement. See you next time.

The podcast was recorded in May 2025 and can be found at <https://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/podcast/> or <https://open.spotify.com/show/11AORpjHqbsYwgg1DJUtLk?si=687dba351d1f45d4>

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