

Virtual Conference Programme

Chair: Dr Graham Whyte, Consultant in Palliative Medicine / Associate Postgraduate Dean for Grief and Bereavement, Marie Curie Hospice, Glasgow / NHS Education for Scotland

09:15 **Welcome & Opening Plenary**

The Deepest Wound: Healing and Hope in the Midst of Hurt – Grief and Bereavement in a Pandemic Age

Dr Donald Macaskill
Chief Executive, Scottish Care

10:05 **Bereavement During COVID-19: The experiences of those bereaved and the voluntary sector services supporting them**

Dr Emily Harrop
Research Associate, Cardiff University

Dr Lucy Selman
Senior Research Fellow, University of Bristol

10:45 **Stories and Experiences During the Pandemic**

Short Presentations and Panel Discussions

- Dr David Christie, Intensive Care Consultant, NHS Dumfries & Galloway
- Alyson Vale, Business & Operations Director, Abbotsford Care
- Yvonne Manson, Care & Clinical Director, Abbotsford Care
- Paul Cuthell, Funeral Director, Thomas Cuthell & Sons

11:25 **Break**

11:45 **Parallel Sessions**

1. What Happens to Your Digital Assets After You Die and How Do You Plan For a Digital Legacy?

James Norris
Founder
Digital Legacy Association

2. Psychological Perspectives on Bereavement, Loss and Grief: Proactive approaches to support others and the importance of compassionate resilience for staff wellbeing

Dr Victoria Thomson
Principal Educator
Psychology
NHS Education for Scotland

3. Palliative Care Patients with Children: Supporting the Family

Donna Hastings
Family Support Worker, St Columba's Hospice Care

Dr Catriona Macpherson
Children and Families Practitioner
Fife Specialist Palliative Care, NHS Fife

4. Spiritual Care, Faith and Mourning Rituals: Understanding how to support people around the time of death

Linda Dunbar
Practice Educator
Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy
NHS Education for Scotland

12:30 **Poster Viewing**

12:45 **Lunch Break**

Chair: Dr Kenneth Donaldson, Medical Director / Associate Postgraduate Dean for Grief and Bereavement, NHS Dumfries & Galloway / NHS Education for Scotland

13:25 **Plenary Session**

Poster Winners Announced

The Impact of Structural Inequalities on Mortality Rates of Ethnic Minorities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dr Gwenetta Curry

Lecturer of Race, Ethnicity, and Health
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
University of Edinburgh

14:15 **Parallel Sessions**

5. Bereavement Matters in Kinship Care

Anne Wilson

Head of Development
Children's Health Scotland

6. Bereavement Support for Families After Critical Illness

Dr Nazir Lone

Senior Clinical Lecturer in Critical Care
University of Edinburgh / Honorary Consultant in Critical Care
NHS Lothian

Janine Wilson

Deputy Charge Nurse, Critical Care Unit
NHS Lothian

**7. Rituals, Memories and Preparing for Death:
Exploring Good Practice and Barriers**

Mark Evans

Head of Spiritual Care and Bereavement Lead
NHS Fife

**8. Managing Legal Processes Following a Death - including Medical
Certification of Cause of Death and interaction with the
Procurator Fiscal**

Dr George Fernie

Senior Medical Reviewer
Death Certification Review Service
Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Sarah Mobsby

Procurator Fiscal Depute, Scottish Fatalities Investigation Unit (West)
Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service

15:00 **Break**

15:15 **Closing Plenary**

A Doctor at the Heart of the Pandemic: What I Learned about Death, Bereavement and Wellbeing

Dr Matthew Walton

London NHS Hospital

16:00 **Closing Comments**

Plenary

The Deepest Wound: Healing and Hope in the Midst of Hurt – Grief and Bereavement in a Pandemic Age

A reflective session which explores the impact of COVID-19 upon the way we have grieved, what lessons we might learn and where we have seen signs of both hope and change in the midst of challenge.

Plenary

Bereavement During COVID-19: The experiences of those bereaved and the voluntary sector services supporting them

The Bereavement during COVID-19 study is a mixed-methods longitudinal study of the experiences and support needs of people bereaved during the pandemic in the UK and the experiences of the voluntary and community sector services which provide bereavement support. The presentation will include baseline results from the survey of 711 bereaved participants, focusing on their experiences at the end of life, support needs and experiences of accessing bereavement support. Implications for improving care and support for people bereaved during and following the pandemic will be discussed, as well as how the research is feeding into the independent UK Commission on Bereavement. The Commission's call for evidence is open to professionals and the public until the end of 2021: <https://bereavementcommission.org.uk/taking-part/>

Short Presentations & Panel Discussions

Stories and Experiences During the Pandemic

This session will incorporate short presentations from four speakers recounting their lived experiences of death, dying and bereavement in different settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will hear stories from an Intensive Care Unit, Care Home and Funeral Director perspective describing the impact on patients, families, and staff.

Parallel Session 1

What Happens to Your Digital Assets After You Die and How Do You Plan For a Digital Legacy?

This session will explore the importance of planning for our 'digital death' in today's digital world. It will examine the normalisation and the ever increasing importance that our 'digital legacy' has on both how we are remembered and the grieving process.

Parallel Session 2

Psychological Perspectives on Bereavement, Loss and Grief: Proactive approaches to support others and the importance of compassionate resilience for staff wellbeing

This session will explore psychological perspectives on loss, bereavement and grief with a view to supporting the workforce to:

- Understand the evolution of psychological theories and models of loss and grief.
- Recognise the effect of individual differences on the expression of grief and understand the known contributing factors that influence an individual's response to loss or bereavement.
- Identify common grief reactions including anticipatory grief, common grief, disenfranchised grief and complicated grief whilst acknowledging variation in the expression of grief.
- Respond to the expression of grief confidently and competently using psychologically informed approaches.
- Supporting the workforce with the experience of loss and grief within the context of a pandemic crisis.

Parallel Session 3

Palliative Care Patients with Children: Supporting the Family

Supporting patients facing the end of life and who have dependent children is very challenging. Separating children's needs and adolescent processing from the protective parental instinct to shield children from the pain of loss takes time and sensitivity. We worry about how to help parents to find the right words, manage the timing and support them in their grief. We worry about managing our own emotions whilst trying to remain professional. However, children and young people who are prepared, included and given choices and opportunities to say goodbye when someone important is dying, or has died, can learn to manage their grief better throughout their childhood and into adulthood. Balancing person-centred care, with family-centred care is necessary, but emotionally demanding.

There will be no easy answers in this webinar, but we hope to offer some practical thoughts.

Parallel Session 4

Spiritual Care, Faith and Mourning Rituals: Understanding how to support people around the time of death

This session will explore:

- How different faith communities deal with death, dying and bereavement, including mourning rituals and other factors.
- Issues to be aware of, and how to ask the right questions of patients and their families / loved ones.

Plenary

The Impact of Structural Inequalities on Mortality Rates of Ethnic Minorities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

During the last 18 months ethnic minority communities have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.K. Existing structural inequalities have created conditions that make these communities more vulnerable to contracting the virus as well as death. Socioeconomic factors explain a portion of these disparities but there are other factors that must be examined to fully understand the impact COVID-19 has had on ethnic minority communities. Racism and discriminatory practices have continued to play a role in the positionality of people from these communities. This presentation will discuss the links between structural racism and ethnic minority mortality rates.

Parallel Session 5

Bereavement Matters in Kinship Care

When you are standing in a room about to deliver a session to Kinship Carers on Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and all ten of them have lost their adult children (parents of the grandchildren now in their care) to drugs or alcohol use – there are no words.

Anne Wilson has set out to delve deeper into this problem with the help of Kinship Carers and professionals and the result is this presentation today. The session will explore the complex issues and emotions for Kinship Families, the support they need and where this might come from.

Parallel Session 6

Bereavement Support for Families After Critical Illness

Dr Nazir Lone

The session will focus on bereavement care in critical care settings. It will include an overview of the current evidence-base, logistics of delivering the service, and findings from a funded quality improvement project.

Janine Wilson

Janine will provide an overview of bereavement care that is provided within Critical Care at the Royal Infirmary in Edinburgh. Janine will cover what specific support is offered following a death in Critical Care and talk a bit about why bereavement in this setting can have a big impact on families, given the suddenness of it sometimes. She will discuss the practicalities involved and talk through some anonymised experiences during COVID-19 and how this has also impacted families.

Parallel Session 7

Rituals, Memories and Preparing for Death: Exploring Good Practice and Barriers

Throughout history, the world of the sacred has often been expressed and understood through story, ritual and religious rites as humanity has tried to find meaning and purpose in illness and death.

There is also recognition that religious care, especially through the use of rituals and symbolism, was both supportive and comforting to the dying and the bereaved. In an increasingly secular world we will look at how rituals, creating memories and spiritual care can support individuals to complete Worden's Tasks of Mourning.

Parallel Session 8

Managing Legal Processes Following a Death - including Medical Certification of Cause of Death and interaction with the Procurator Fiscal

Information on the legal processes involved following a death in Scotland with input provided by the Death Certification Review Service and the Procurator Fiscal.

Plenary

A Doctor at the Heart of the Pandemic: What I Learned about Death, Bereavement and Wellbeing

Dr Matthew Walton is an emergency medicine doctor working in London. He worked at the epicentre of the pandemic in both Accident & Emergency and an Intensive Care Unit and is sharing an intimate insight into his lived experience at the forefront of the crisis. Matt will explain what it felt like to treat the very first cases of COVID-19 and how the situation progressed. Matt will cover the treatment and death of patients and colleagues alike, reflecting on how we can best-support our healthcare workers through crisis. Importantly, Matt will aim to be honest about the emotional and personal challenges of the pandemic and the lessons he learned on wellbeing, death and bereavement.