



Founder: Carolyn Cleveland

A JOURNEY THROUGH SERIOUS INCIDENTS USING EMPATHY

Complaints in the health and social care often go beyond dissatisfaction of a service and into issues of patient safety, harm and sadly even death. Having a loved one die unexpectedly in hospital, elicits powerful emotions and often from the perspective of having witnessed distressing, sometimes traumatic events. Anger, personal guilt and needing to be heard, are just some of the complex emotions NHS staff need to be skilled at understanding and working with. Witnessing events, puts the bereaved in a position of having often crucial information, a key part of thorough investigations, but information often tangled up in highly charged emotions and, if not handled compassionately, can not only compromise investigations, but cause prolonged psychological harm (Duty of Candour).



The **National Quality Board** has identified **8 key principles** concerning bereaved families and carers in the **National Guidance on Learning from Deaths** guidelines, which Trust Boards are now accountable for ensuring compliance with alongside the Serious Incident Framework. Part of this compliance is ensuring training for staff to be able to support bereaved parties **'Providers should review and, if necessary, enhance skills and training to support this agenda'** (National Guidance on Learning from Deaths March '17).

From a perspective of loss and bereavement counselling, and having been through the complaints process following the death of a child, Carolyn, founder of C&C Empathy Training, insightfully challenges thinking and culture and examines in a thought provoking way some of the emotions surrounding very sensitive issues, building confidence in loss and bereavement issues.

Learning through narratives, brings authenticity to subjects. Having the opportunity to further analyse such a narrative on a deeper level as this training does, enables the exploration of not only others emotions and needs, but our own too, alongside personal and cultural biases and attitudes, and how these impact on communication, behaviours and outcomes. Exploring how to optimise empathy, gives an enriched, felt, and informative experience to empower those working with frustrated, bereaved, and often very vulnerable people, to create a compassionate and trusting professional relationship and optimal experience.



Learning Outcomes:

- Understand a journey through a complaint - seeing different perspectives, observing the presence and absence of empathy.
- Explore the 'Funnel of Life' and the implication on communication. Identifying and understanding the difference between empathy, sympathy and apathy, and the impact on the human connection.
- Observe how biases and the lack of empathy in one-on-one encounters has the potential to cause psychological harm.
- Learn to recognise, listen to and understand 'emotional data', and the emotional experience. With focus on bereavement.
- Explore what gets in the way of responding with empathy and how to develop a professional, compassionate approach.

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