

“CREATING A CULTURE OF LEARNING THROUGH ‘REFLECTIVE DE-BRIEFING SESSIONS’ FOLLOWING DEATHS IN NURSING HOMES”

JO HOCKLEY,  
ST COLUMBA’S HOSPICE,  
EDINBURGH, EH5 3RW,  
SCOTLAND, UK

The presentation explores the use of ‘reflective de-briefing sessions’ following deaths in nursing homes. This is part of an on-going ‘action research’ study to build bridges between the hospice and a number of nursing homes in order to develop knowledge of palliative care. Action research is a strategy that brings about social change through action, developing and improving practice and, at the same time, generating and testing theory (Binnie & Titchen 1999). A critical theory (Kim 1999) framework drives the study.

There is a growing number of deaths in nursing homes in the UK as those admitted are increasingly more frail. One of the difficulties of nursing home work is the difficulty of recruitment and retention of staff. The majority of those doing the caring are untrained. Creating a culture of learning and support within a context of minimal resources has been a major focus of the study which includes ‘reflective de-briefing sessions’ after the death of a resident. As staff reflect on the specific care that has been given to dying residents, so learning becomes relevant. The sessions are taped and transcribed. There is evidence through qualitative analysis of the transcriptions that not only are the sessions supportive, and educative but they also aid communication between staff.

Kim, H.S. (1999) Critical reflective inquiry for knowledge development in nursing practice. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 29 (5): 1205-1212.

Titchen, A. & Binnie, A. (1999) Freedom to Practice. Butterworth Heinemann: Oxford.