'MAKING MEMORIES'

AN EXHIBITION OF ARTWORK BY PATIENTS OF VICTORIA HOSPICE

Background

Within hospice care the importance of art and craft activities for patients with life limiting illnesses is acknowledged, but awareness of the benefits it can bring to both patients and their families/carers is not as recognised within the general public.*[1] Many people do not realise the significance a piece of artwork can have, both for the patient during the process of creating and for family and friends who are often recipients of these works, produced at such a difficult time in life.*[2*3]

Aims

Arts and crafts are an integral part of Day Care services at Victoria Hospice, Kirkcaldy and yet many people are unaware that patients are offered this service. An external public exhibition showcasing patients' artwork was organised to:

- Dispel misconceptions about hospice care - changing perceptions of the service and the patients*[4*5]
- Engage the public through artwork rather than information - connecting with the community
- Highlight the services of Fife Specialist Palliative Care FSPC
- Boost patients self-esteem and sense of achievement

Findings

The exhibition was displayed for 3 months in The Rothes Halls, Glenrothes and was acessed by the general public. Most feedback however, came from those already aware of FSPC services. The most significant finding was the effect of the exhibition on the families of deceased patients. Having a non-clinical environment, to view and appreciate the artwork, provided a place of comfort and a connection to their loved ones. For others it was the first time they had been to a gallery space and they were immensely proud of the achievements of their loved ones.

Conclusion

The exhibition was a success and overall has shown the potential for using art, out in the community, to create connections and conversations surrounding specialist palliative care.

The act of placing the artwork in a non-clinical setting also provided a way for the art to become more accessible to all. There is potential to develop more legacy work, working with families and patients as well as providing workshops for the public to coincide with future exhibitions.

References

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Fife Specialist Palliative Care

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