



# Bereavement Support Using a Remembrance Service

Joy Elliott

Patient & Family Support

ACCORD Hospice

## Background

There have been many changes over the last hundred years or so in the way society regards bereavement. In the past mourning rituals identified the bereaved and brought a public dimension to the private experience of grief, however, present day bereavements tend to be more hidden, potentially denying bereaved people the comfort of wider community support.

The Patient & Family Support service within ACCORD Hospice recognised the need to support and acknowledge the losses that affect individuals and families and chose to hold an annual service of remembering. The purpose of this was to offer a supportive space for bereaved people to publicly acknowledge their grief within a caring environment.



## Format of Services

The service is available for families who have been supported by the palliative care service within Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire.

- First service held seven years ago
- Held within Paisley Town Hall to accommodate numbers of family members and allow eclectic content
- Themes to each service to reflect the struggles and changes through life
- Staff and volunteers available to welcome and support all those who attend
- Children are recognised as an important part of the day



## Evaluation

Anecdotal feedback from a selection of attendees gave a positive view of the service however it was felt a more formal evaluation should take place to ensure the services were truly meeting the needs of those attending.

Following the service in 2010, a bereavement support volunteer made contact with attendees and sought agreement to send out a questionnaire to capture the thoughts and feelings of the service from the family members. This resulted in a 77% response rate.



## Results

- 95% of respondents reported the service as a positive experience
- Although happy to attend, most people did not want to contribute to the organisation of the day
- Responses regarding the venue and content of the service were positive, however some difficulty with transport and parking were highlighted

## Quotes

"It was nice to be with other people whose lives have been affected by the loss of a loved one"

"The hall was decorated and set out beautifully"

"I thought it was lovely the way it was all set out"



## The Way Forward?

The planning and delivery of this service only happens through the willingness of the bereavement support volunteers and staff of ACCORD Hospice and it is recognised that the service can provide a supportive environment for staff also. The evidence is there to suggest that this approach is a worthwhile venture for all involved and it could provide a useful model for other organisations who wish to host similar events.