ENCOURAGING CONVERSATIONS

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Helps us not to

pre-empt what we

think people need

INTRODUCTION

Let's talk about the elephant in the room: Death, dying and bereavement are often discussed only when they can no longer be ignored.

> The Macmillan 'No Regrets' report April 2017 stated that around two in three people think we do not talk about death enough.

The Health Promoting Palliative Care (HPPC) Project team encourage people from all walks of life to openly discuss and plan for end of life matters.

Conversations enable people to plan ahead, supporting themselves and their loved ones, when end of life issues cause distress.

Nursing staff within Hospital Based Complex Clinical Care (HBCCC) recognise the importance of having such conversations with patients and families who require intensive support in the hospital environment.

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CONVERSATION STARTER

'To Absent Friends' Remembrance Event

Tables were set up at 5 NHS sites.

Each table was manned for 2 hours, allowing communication with staff and visitors, so that materials could be introduced sensitively.

Staff, visitors and patients were given the opportunity to write in a memorial book or write tags to hang on the tree.

Leaflets relating to a wide range of end of life matters were available for people to take home.



Facilitated Workshop

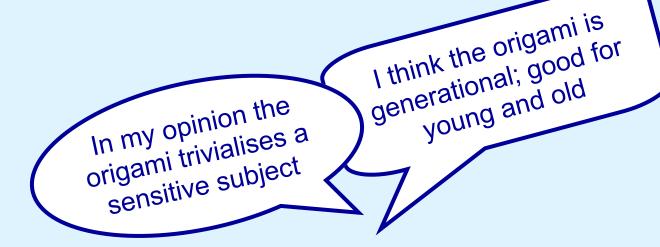
Participants had the opportunity to:

- Work together in small groups
- Try out the resources
- Engage with the facilitators
- Provide feedback at each station by writing on the paper tablecloths
- Explore ways of encouraging discussion and forward planning
- Consider opportunities for engaging patients, carers and families in end of life discussions and planning
- Reflect on personal and professional values.









RESULTS

The majority of people welcomed and participated in the remembrance event.

- 11 tributes were written in the books 55 tags were placed on the trees
- 44% mentioned family members
- 98% sent love and/or kisses
- 55% wrote that they missed their loved ones.

The most commonly used words and phrases from the tags are summarised in the dove.

When negative reactions were expressed, staff responded with sensitivity, resulting in supportive conversations.

No one attending the outpatient department placed a tag or wrote in the memorial book.

One site is keeping the memorial tree and memory book on display throughout the year.

Staff will host a similar event in November 2017 to participate in the annual 'To Absent Friends' festival held throughout Scotland.

During the 'Conversation Starter' staff identified a need to be more familiar with resources available that support conversations around death dying and bereavement. This resulted in the workshop.

9 Palliative Care Link Nurses and 1 Student Nurse attended.

Staff provided positive evaluations for the sessions with feedback mentioning the following:

- Valuable update
- The complexity of communication skills re death & dying **Learning about legal aspects**
- How to approach relatives with compassion
- Emotional in a good way.

CONCLUSION

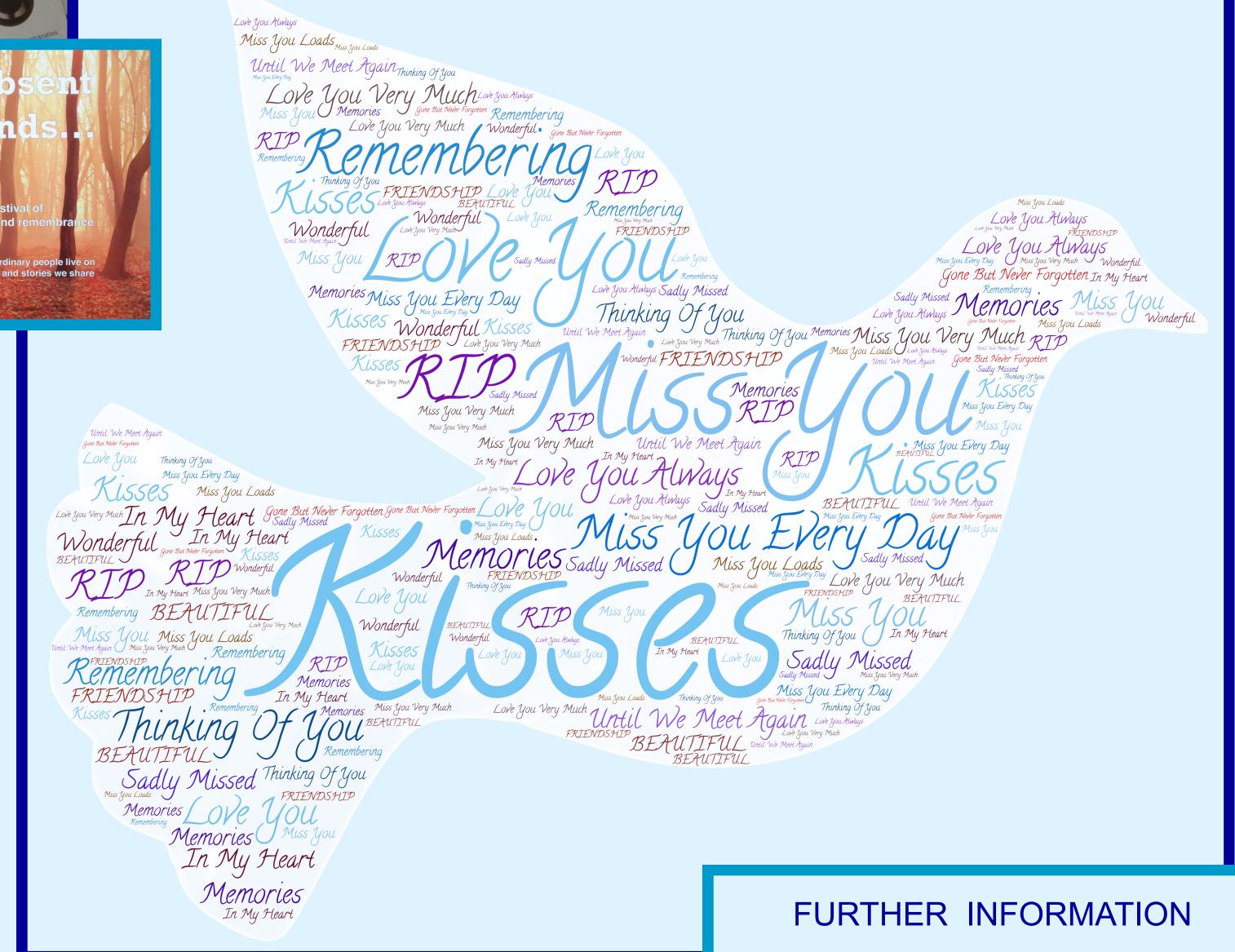
HBCCC staff have demonstrated a passion for person centred care, early intervention in palliative care and community involvement. Staff experienced an opportunity to openly discuss their personal thoughts and professional roles in relation to end of life matters.

Reasons for non participation by the Outpatient Department client group are not identifiable. An alternative approach should be considered next year.

The HPPC Project brought a national community based campaign into a hospital setting leading to:

- Staff feeling empowered and supported
- Patients and families being given a voice
- Opportunities to have conversations about bereavement, death and dying.

Meaningful conversations support the Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care



Hospital Based Complex Clinical Care (HBCCC) www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/dl/DL(2015)11.pdf The Strategic Framework for Action on Palliative and End of Life Care: Scottish Government www.gov.scot/publications/2015/12/4053 www.toabsentfriends.org.uk www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk







