

Compassionate Communication: It's Good to Talk

Situation

Community tele-care response services assist people who need some extra support to stay in their own homes. The service gives people the security of knowing that they can call for assistance if they need help at any time of the day or night (e.g. if they fall or need personal care). People can call for help by activating an alarm unit connected to their phone line



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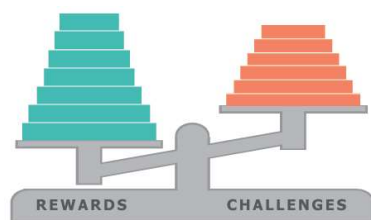
Background

One quarter of the 57, 000 people who die in Scotland each year will die at home. Many of this group will need the support of community telecare-alarm responders (CTARs).

A series of four one-day workshops was requested, and organised, for CTARs to help them feel more equipped in their work with people at the end-of-life (eol).

4 Elements of Compassionate Communication

Little is known about the experience of CTARs. To gain understanding, the workshops began by modelling compassionate communication - *attend, understand, empathise, help*. Evaluation suggests this process helped participants explore and discuss their experiences of caring for people at the eol, which helped the workshop leader tailor the sessions to their learning needs.



Understanding and Empathising

What CTARs found rewarding was: being able to spend time supporting patients and family members, being able to promote comfort and dignity at the eol.

What CTARs found challenging was: a sense of 'working in the dark' with limited information' and the emotional labour of 'carrying the weight of the world' on their shoulders.

Helping

Facilitated discussions about key palliative care topics helped the CTARs feel more informed about, and empowered in, their work of caring for people at the eol. Workshop topics included: key facts about dying in Scotland, what matters most at the eol, where to find reliable information, common symptoms and what helps, and remembering what is needed for staff to feel well in themselves.

