

Managing Compassion Fatigue in Hospitals

with Gerry Jackson

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The events in the Mid Staffordshire Hospital Trust have brought into sharp focus the necessity for hospital staff to provide compassionate care for patients and their loved ones. One of the findings subsequent to the Francis Report was that 'there is strong evidence that where staff are well supported and where their well-being is a priority for their organisation, there is a significant and positive impact on outcomes for patients and service users.'



Nursing and medical staff are under unrelenting pressure and have to deal with traumatic events, such as unexpected deaths, deaths of babies and children far too frequently. Less frequent but causing serious stress are errors in medical and nursing decisions. These events sometimes cause a variety of adverse reactions in staff which, if not managed well, can accumulate and become 'Compassion Fatigue'. This will interfere with the ability of staff to provide compassionate care to patients and their loved ones and with their ability to maintain an enjoyable private life.

This course is designed for Nurses and Doctors, for hospital Chaplains and other staff and will provide you with the knowledge and skills to:

- A) provide a structured and effective support system to staff following traumatic incidents and
- B) Ensure that interactions with patients and their loved ones are done with 'Compassionate Care.'

The course can be run in a one day or two day format. The two day format provides a higher level of training with the opportunity for delegates to be able to try out the skills in practice sessions.

These courses have been run for **Health Education England** and across the UK in a variety of hospitals and have received excellent feedback. Details of feedback from hospitals and Health Education England can be found on our website at www.mgjpeoplesupport.co.uk/home/course-feedback, together with useful information on the subject of managing traumatic situations and Compassion Fatigue.

Course Content

- The NHS model of Psychosocial Care and Psychological First Aid (PFA)
- The 'Peer Support' model of staff support suitable for use in hospitals
- The interpersonal skills of Compassionate Care
- The definition of and signs and symptoms of Compassion Fatigue
- Strategies and techniques to minimise the impact of Compassion Fatigue
- Ensuring those in need of professional mental health care are referred appropriately



Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Compassion Fatigue

Compassion Fatigue is profound emotional and physical exhaustion that develops over time when people are constantly required to care for people in distressing circumstances. It is a gradual erosion of all the things that keep us connected to others in our caregiver role: our empathy, our hope, and of course our compassion— not only for others but also for ourselves. People are particularly vulnerable when they are not well supported and valued in the work that they do.

PFA is recommended in the DOH guidance for the NHS issued in 2009, 'Planning for the Psychosocial and Mental Health Care of People Affected by Major Incidents and Disasters'. It is an evidence based approach to help people in the short and medium term after major incidents and disasters and smaller scale traumatic incidents. It is intended to minimise the distress that typically occurs after traumatic incidents and to help people develop ways of managing and coping.

It is a flexible and practical approach capable of being delivered in a variety of settings and in a wide range of circumstances and is ideal for supporting hospital staff after incidents that are experienced as being traumatic.



Benefits of Attending This Training

Doctors and Nurses who attend this training will develop the skills to cope more effectively with the frequent traumatic events in their work and will be more content, efficient and compassionate in their work. This will lead to cost savings associated with reduced sickness absence, fewer complaints from patients and their loved ones and reduced likelihood of litigation against Hospital Trusts. The public perception of hospitals and their staff as caring people and organisations will improve and, because of that, the results of Care Quality Commission inspections are likely to be enhanced.

Gerry Jackson

Is a Humanitarian Assistance and Traumatic Incident Responder. He has wide ranging experience of providing support following traumatic incidents and facilitating training and workshop groups in the NHS, commerce, industry, local authorities and emergency services both nationally and internationally. He has provided training in hospitals across the UK and is currently providing the two day version of this course for **Health Education England, Wessex**, for Consultants. He is a retired Police officer with personal experience of working at the scene of traumatic incidents and disasters, including Lockerbie and the Marchioness Riverboat Disaster.

Access to Courses

This training is particularly cost effective when delivered 'in house', within a hospital environment, where it can be run with delegate numbers of 12 — 30, which means that the cost per delegate is affordable. If your Trust does not have sufficient delegates to put on a course, it may be worth considering contacting other trusts nearby to get enough people together to run a course. If you wish to discuss alternative ways of attending this training, please contact Gerry by telephone or email.

For more information please contact Gerry Jackson:

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