

- ▶ Provide counselling.

**Aim** Undertake a pilot to

- ▶ Allow time and give value to the psychological well-being of patients/families
- ▶ Enable staff to recognise emotional distress and empower them to act upon it
- ▶ Enable difficult conversations to be handled confidently and sensitively.

#### Method

- ▶ Recruited six, part time counsellors
- ▶ Reflective sessions to share experiences
- ▶ Introduction of 10 Psychosocial Care Champions
- ▶ Questionnaire to establish a baseline
- ▶ Training in providing psychosocial care
- ▶ Clinical supervision – supervisor and supervisee training, developing documentation
- ▶ Innovative training of volunteers and non-clinical staff in psychosocial skills.

#### Results

- ▶ Psychosocial Champions – encourage informal, regular conversations about psychosocial needs
- ▶ Counsellors provided a safe space to express and explore patients' sense of loss
- ▶ "Hospice brand" brought familiarity enabling counsellors to develop therapeutic relationships in short timeframe
- ▶ Questionnaire (42% response) revealed:
  - ▷ Time and capacity – an ongoing challenge
- ▶ Respondents were able to:
  - ▷ Identify psychological/social needs and own limitations
  - ▷ Develop trusting, non-judgemental relationships with patients/carers.

#### Discussion

- ▶ Insufficient capacity to improve psychosocial data – next phase
- ▶ Questionnaire will be repeated to assess the progress made.

**Conclusion** This pilot phase has identified the need to have a full time resource driving psychosocial care who will:

- ▶ Ensure specialist and general psychosocial support for patients/ families is available at all times
- ▶ Continue to develop the MDT
- ▶ Create a culture where people feel confident to try new skills
- ▶ Ongoing training and development
- ▶ Develop a tool kit based on the findings from the questionnaire
- ▶ Maintain the integration of bereavement services
- ▶ Increase external liaison with other services
- ▶ Explore the possibility of income generation.

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#### IMPROVING PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE: THE WAY FORWARD

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**Introduction** A review identified the need to:

- ▶ Create a strategy for delivering psychosocial care
- ▶ Develop psychosocial skills