Bereaved carers known to the specialist palliative care team (SPCT) were invited to attend over 5 months, of the 142 people contacted, 62 responded and 27 of those expressed a wish to take part. 2 groups were set up and the carers attended for 7 sessions. Feedback was collected at the end of each session.

Results It was found that a time and number limited CBTG appears to be an effective way of working with bereaved people. The fall out rate from the programme was low and the evaluations showed that it had met the groups' expectations. One of the most important aspects was their sharing of experiences, as this assisted in normalising the grief process and enabled them to develop coping strategies and increase their resilience which reduced dependency on other professionals. Using expressive arts was particularly effective in that it facilitated access to deeper emotions in an unthreatening way with requests for further sessions. This new innovative project provided an inclusive equitable service across the region for families known to the SPCT. The closed group provides a different type of environment enabling deeper therapeutic work to take place compared to traditional bereavement support groups. It is user led and cost effective and its template can be replicated and adapted to suit other services needs.

P21

CLOSED BEREAVEMENT THERAPY GROUP: A NEW WAY FORWARD?

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10.1136/bmjspcare-2011-000105.214

Introduction The End of Life Care Strategy recognises that care does not stop at the point of death but continues through to bereavement. A Closed Bereavement Therapy Group (CBTG) was developed by a hospice and a charity supporting people with cancer.

Aims and methods The aim of the project was to provide an alternative choice to traditional bereavement support by offering a therapy group that nobody else could join once the programme had started. It offered a safe sharing environment to enable people to understand and explore their grief.