DEVELOPING A CARERS GROUP
Dorothy Haskins, Becky Chaddock, Wendy Ashton Eden Valley Hospice, Carlisle, Cumbria

Introduction It was identified that there was a need to support carers within a multidisciplinary environment. The group enabled carers to meet and share experiences. It is important to care for the carers.

Aims
► To provide a structured programme for carers.
► To impart knowledge and information to carers on a variety of topics.
► To have a holistic approach to providing support for carers, and to incorporate all members of palliative care team to contribute to the programme.

Methods
► Evaluated existing service for carers.
► Visited carers group in another locality.
► Informally interviewed carers at Day Hospice re: need and content of the programme.
► Developed a 12 session programme over 6 weeks, meeting weekly at the Hospice.
► Pilot included Day Hospice patient carers, and then expanded to open referral system.
► Evaluated each session and then the entire programme.

Results
Feedback from evaluation shows carers felt supported, gained motivation and benefitted from useful information.

From pilot session:-
► 10 sessions scored 100% very satisfied
► 1 session scored 20% least useful, 20% most useful, 60% very satisfied.

From 2 sessions:-
► 67% were women
► 33% were men.

Informal comments were positive. Several would like an avenue to continue to meet after group has finished.

Discussion
► Results show that the need to support and provide information to carers was met
► At the end of the programme carers reported they felt more supported and better informed
► Established peer support continues with some carers
► Feedback showed that it would be more beneficial to have longer sessions over an 8 week period
► Referrals avenue to be extended to other teams and programme to be more widely publicised.

Conclusion
With user involvement we have developed a support service to carers with a focus and structure. This supports and enables carers to care for themselves while caring for others.