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## A COOPERATIVE PARTICIPATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A BEREAVEMENT DROP-IN SERVICE

Seamus Nash *Kirkwood Hospice, Huddersfield, UK*

10.1136/bmjspcare-2011-000105.67

**Purpose** Starting from a position that users of a hospice based bereavement service reported that the current drop-in was assisting in their coping and movement through grief, a study was undertaken to examine in detail the service users claims and to ascertain what factors led to the drop-in being 'effective'.

### Key concepts

- ▶ Cooperative participative inquiry
- ▶ Action research
- ▶ Phenomenology
- ▶ Epistemology
- ▶ Relational depth

**Methods** A Cooperative Participative Inquiry (CPI) model was used. Heron (1996) and Reason (2001) argue that CPI as a science of the person puts the emphasis on 'first person' research and thus locates the participant at the heart of the research inquiry.

Drop-in users volunteered to become co research participants in the research. Ethical approval was sought through the hospice research committee. Four phases were identified-agreeing the area of activity, engagement in the actions agreed, observation and recording of process and outcome, immersion and engagement of experience and finally re-assemblage and discussion of the project in the light of the experience. Results were written up, discussed and agreed.

### Results

- ▶ As a form of assistance for bereavement support the drop-in was effective
- ▶ Peer support was considered vital
- ▶ Forming of relationships between users and staff was central to creating a 'safe space'
- ▶ Drop-in was perceived as validating of users experience, non-medicalising of their grief.

**Discussion** The research has implications for person-centred care and highlights the continuing medicalisation and pathologising of grief.

**Conclusion** Although the process is intense, the results are a testament to the group. User involvement in research in this manner ensures the 'voice' of users are heard, that client experiences are accepted and validated and that stigma and pathology are reduced.