

# WRITING IN BEREAVEMENT GROUP

## Discovering a new narrative

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### Background

We recognised the limitations of our bereavement groups and were eager to explore grief at a deeper level, through a creative medium, guided by national standards.

(Bereavement Care Service Standards, 2013)



### Methods

Invitations were sent to bereaved people using hospice services. A closed group ran for six sessions, limited to six members and two facilitators, who participated to allow a collegiate approach. Each session opened with a poem, brought by the group, allowing the group to reflect on their mood, helping facilitators to lead with greater sensitivity adapting to the group needs. Homework was set weekly, providing the focus for the first half of the next session. The remainder of the session was used for written exercises using techniques of expressive writing.

### Aims

1. To write about our lives, feelings, thoughts, share our writing with others and reflect on past experiences, including service user feedback
2. For group members to discover a new tool allowing them to access their grief in a different way
3. Through group exercises, members will discover a new narrative and a new source of meaning to their lives.



### Results

Evaluation was mainly qualitative, measured by attendance and evaluation forms. Facilitators monitored and reflected weekly. Our first group's predicted results were confirmed by user evaluation, which then informed our next group. Facilitators witnessed aims met, promoting further writing groups, thus ensuring Hospice bereavement support reaches a wider level of need.

**POETRY - PROSE - UNSENT LETTER - MEMORIES - HOLIDAY - I COME FROM... - MY DIAMOND - IF I WERE A PLACE!**

### Conclusion

The conclusions and recommendations for the hospice bereavement service is to include this group as a regular service. We recognise the limitations of educational levels, however, skilful facilitation enables a generous group.

### Quote

Using a different medium has proved to unlock the unspoken

**"The course has helped me to break out of a writing drought, and find courage and vocalise about my late wife." Gavin 2019**

#### I AM A LIGHTHOUSE

**I AM A LIGHTHOUSE CONTENT IN MY ISOLATION.  
NO ONE TO CHALLENGE ME.  
SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF MY WORTH.  
I STAND BETWEEN THE LAND AND SEA.  
IMPERVIOUS TO THE WEATHER.  
ON GUARD, MY TASK TO GUIDE THE LOST AND UNWARY  
FROM DESTRUCTION ON THE ROCKS BELOW.  
A BEACON OF HOPE TO SHIPS AND FEARFUL HUMANS,  
WHOSE OPTIMISM OFTEN OVERCOMES THEIR CAUTION.  
I HAVE SEEN THE SEA IN ALL ITS MOODS, A RESTLESS  
SPIRIT, LIFE GIVING, TERRIFYING AND WONDERFUL.**

CONSTANCE J BROWN  
WRITING BEREAVEMENT  
2019



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