

Grief Support - Chairperson's report for the Year 2015/16.

It is a pleasure to present my report as Chairman of Grief Support Services covering the period July 2015 to the end of June 2016.

It has been another encouraging and challenging year for Grief Support as we continue to operate in an ever changing environment. We welcome our two new board members, Jill and Colleen and at the same time say a big thankyou to Megan as she leaves the board. We do appreciate the work she has done as a board member and also the work she continues to do with Janet on the After Suicide groups.

It has been encouraging to see the real progress made in using the strengths of the board to lay a better foundation for Grief Support to move into the future. While we do not know the specific shape of the future a sound platform has been laid to be in a good position to take advantage of whatever is offered. Our new relationship with Family Link, who have taken over our contract with DHB, is working well. We continue to have discussions with other NGOs as to the way forward with a combined contract with DHB. This is now leading to a new legal structure under which it will operate. In this regard special thanks go to Janet and Eddie for their work in representing our cause in these discussions.

A big vote of thanks must go to our team leader Janet Baird who managed to juggle her administrative role with counselling. She attended many meetings in relation to the new arrangement with the other NGOs; not to mention the time she spends supervising and encouraging our team of trainee and volunteer counsellors. Thank you Janet.

I would also like to acknowledge our two other paid members of staff, Ali and Denise. Special thanks to Denise who has been a big help in getting our funding back on track and as well other administrative functions. We also appreciate Ali's continuing contribution and special congratulations to her in completing her Bachelor's degree in counselling. We acknowledge the huge contribution our team of volunteer counsellors, Denise, Paul, Te Aomarama, Michelle and Kent for generously sharing their time. Thanks also to our student counsellors Steve and Anna for their commitment .Thanks to all these staff who make Grief Support the valuable and professional service it is today.

Finally, I have greatly appreciated the support of fellow Board members Debbie, Bronwyn, Eddie, Megan, Colleen and Jill as we move forward through strategic plans to ensure the future survival and growth of Grief Support. A key element of these plans includes increasing our community education programme in relation to suicide prevention while, at the same time, continuing our role in providing subsidised grief counselling and post-suicide support.

2017 will be another challenging and exciting year for Grief Support as we move forward into new areas. I am sure the Service will grow and flourish based on the strategic decisions made in the past year. Thank you all.

Peter Gibbs

Chairman, Grief Support Services, July 2016