

Grief Support Services AGM Chair Person's Report 2020-2021

Grief Support Services is a dynamic, evolving counselling service supporting those who experience grief and loss. It has been operating since 1987, and continues to provide a leading service to the community.

Grief Support Services has had another busy year, supporting clients affected by grief and loss. This year we saw 521 clients for a total of 2408 sessions. This represents an increase of 661 sessions and 63 clients from July 2017 to July 2021. The Service Manager's report tabled at the AGM gives a good breakdown of the detailed activity of the service. All this activity is performed by skilled, professional staff, some are paid, some are students and some are volunteers. Our skill set is diverse, with competent counsellors, administrators, leaders and business management. The Board would like to thank all staff for their dedicated work throughout 2020 and 2021.

The Board and Grief Support have continued to operate smoothly, with the interests of the organisation at heart.

Sharron Harris joined the Board in July 2020. The members of the Board are now; Angela Werder, Dawn Picken, Eddie Jackson, Bronwyn Jackson, Philip Brown and Sharron Harris. We are recruiting two new members who will join in the 2021-2022 year.

The Board has a good range of skills to support Grief Support Services. These include IT, marketing and communications, financial management, human resources, health networks and policy, event planning and much more. The debates about our community and the role Grief Support plays within it are vigorous and clearly focussed on doing the best for all our stake holders.

We provide our service to the community through generous support from many, philanthropic organisations, volunteers and donations. Without the support of the many donors, we would not be able to operate at the level we do.

The staff bring their best to Grief Support Services. Over the last eighteen months this has meant increasing our use of IT and flexible working practices. Everyone has risen to the challenge, even though it's not a challenge we would wish.

This year as the Suicide Post Vention service has come up to speed we are providing support to clients in more ways than ever. Suicide Loss Support Peers are able to provide lived experience for clients dealing with the suicide of a loved one. Networking and supporting our colleagues in other providers are also a big part of the contract. This is a new way of providing our services as a contract funded by the DHB.

Grief Support Services DHB contract is held by Allied Potential Group (APG). The strategic decision to join APG gives GSS opportunities that an organisation of our size would not usually have.

I am looking forward to the coming year as we see how our community and the way we provide services evolve post the acute phase of Covid 19. There are opportunities for GSS to expand what and how we do things, to make our service available to more clients of all ages and to support others to do so.

Bronwyn Jackson
October 2021