

8 October 2019

Once again I am able to report that Grief Support Services has had a pro-active year supporting members of our community, keeping upskilled and maintaining connection with the community. We are very fortunate to have a skilled and compassionate workforce both in the counselling rooms and as first point of contact in the office. Our workforce comprises of both paid and voluntary staff and I acknowledge each person for the part they have in providing our valuable service. Each person's commitment expresses that their part is more than 'coming to work' and their genuine care for the wellbeing of our clients.

The demand for our service has grown significantly this year meaning we have worked with more clients and provided more sessions than before but the limit to our resources has meant we have also had a longer waiting list than ever before. I believe this reflects the success of national campaigns encouraging people to seek help for their mental wellbeing, population growth and our good reputation.

We have been purposeful with our professional development budget with staff attending relevant training such as "getting to grips with grief", "when families hurt" and working with trauma while also taking advantage of freely available training provided through TMAPS, the DHB, BTI, and on occasion inviting speakers to our team meetings. Some of the topics covered in these contexts include "assessing and supporting suicide risk in young people", "the power of language to support practice", "family harm", "unravelling the adolescent brain" and "spirituality and growth in counselling practice".

Each month, on alternate fortnights we have a team meeting and peer supervision. Bi-monthly the peer supervision becomes cultural supervision and we are most grateful to Reweti Te Mete for supporting our growth and practice as he does in such a patient and enlightening way.

We have delivered the 8-week WAVES programme twice in this financial year with feedback from attendees confirming that it provides information and support that is relevant to them. It also provides space for clients to connect with others who, having also suffered loss to suicide, understand the huge impact of such loss.

Our Memorial Service was well attended and once again I thank our speakers Carol Goldie-Anderson and Renee Wilton (Suicide Prevention/Postvention Coordinator; DHB), and Michelle Burling and Jodie Fitzwater for sharing themselves with us. Thanks too to Legacy Trust and Mike Savage for their support of this event.

We have maintained connection with the community by providing presentations and through networking activities. We have given presentations in a number of different settings ranging from a Rotary Club, a 'Wonder Women' event sponsored by a legal firm to Te Whare Maiangi, a Doctors' practice and community organisations. Networking activities have also ranged broadly from the Greerton Business after 5 to DHB and NGO meetings and meetings with funders.

A change of landlords meant a change to the configuration of rooms we use and our administration office is now set separately to the waiting room which has been a positive change in terms of security and privacy.

I would like to acknowledge our dedicated, skilled, compassionate and 'on to it' board of trustees, well led by chairperson Bronwyn Jackson, for their inspired governance of this NGO. It is a pleasure to be a spoke in the GSS wheel with you.

Final thanks and acknowledgement goes to the funders who have understood the importance of the work we do and have seen fit to support us with the funds necessary to sustain this work and to the clients who have provided support with their donations.

*Janet Baird*

Service Manager / Senior Counsellor

**Bethlehem / Omokoroa Opportunity Centre**

**Kathleen D Kirby Charitable Trust**

