Drug and alcohol related bereavement project
Spring 2015 Update

The three months since our January newsletter have seen some excellent progress for the project.

**Training as a volunteer**
We are now ready to launch our peer support volunteer training! We will be holding the first two rounds between April and June. Once trained, this group of bereaved people will go on to provide vital peer support to others who have lost loved ones through drug or alcohol use.

All peer support volunteers attend two days of core training. The first round of training is on Saturday **25 April** and Saturday **9 May**. The second round is on Wednesday **10 June** and Wednesday **24 June**, all taking place in London. There is still space on both of these rounds for more volunteers – please do let us know if you are interested. There will be a third round of training outside London in the Autumn.

Once volunteers have been trained they will either: be trained to act as a B-friender by offering informal support to a peer face-to-face or over the phone; take part in Cruse’s existing ABC training course and provide more **structured and in-depth emotional phone support** to peers; or attend and then go on to co-facilitate a peer support group.

**Receiving support**
If you or anyone you know would be interested in receiving support from our volunteers (once they have been trained) or attending our first group for family members bereaved through drug or alcohol use, please let us know so we can get in touch once the support is up-and-running in the summer.

**Developing information resources**
We are also developing information resources for bereaved family members and creating a ‘one-stop-shop’ website. We know that looking for information and support at a time of immense stress is very difficult, and want to bring everything relevant into one place. To do this we need you help to make sure the information is both relevant and sensitively worded.

We are running two resource development workshops (in London on **16 June** and in Birmingham **17 June**, both 10.00am-2.00pm). Please let us know if you’d like to attend; we will cover travel expenses. If you would like to share ideas but can’t make the group then let us know and you can be **consulted via telephone.**

**Naming our project**
We’re looking for inspiration as we’d like to give the project a snappier name! Any ideas gratefully received.
Other news
In March we attended a research seminar at St Christopher’s Hospice where Dr Christine Valentine of the Centre for Death and Society at the University of Bath presented their joint project with Stirling University. They will be launching guidelines in June for professionals who come into contact with people bereaved through drug and alcohol use.

We will very soon publish a research briefing covering the findings from our consultation and research in Year 1 of the project. This complements our scoping review (pdf) from last year – an overview of the evidence and data that exists on the subject of drug and alcohol related bereavement.

Cruse Bereavement Care will be holding their national conference on Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 July. This will include a workshop on drug and alcohol related bereavement. More details will be available on the Cruse website shortly. If you are interested, please let us know.

There has also been some mention of the issue of drug and alcohol related bereavement in the media – see The Bristol Post’s coverage of the 2014 Bereaved Through Addiction service and news of a new drug and alcohol bereavement support group started by the Bridge Project in Bradford. We wish them well with their work.

If you would like to discuss any element of the project, whether you are a bereaved person interested in training as a volunteer, a practitioner who wants to learn more about the project and establish links from your own service or anyone else please do get in touch. As part of the wider promotion of the project we may be able to come and present the project at seminars, conferences and events.

Best wishes,

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Thank you to everyone who has supported the project so far by being sharing your story or giving feedback at a workshop. You contribution has been invaluable! We look forward to working with you as volunteers.

This project is kindly support by:

- DrugFAM - www.drugfam.co.uk / 01494 442 777 / @DrugFAM
- Bereaved Through Addiction - www.bereavementthroughaddiction.com
- Centre for Death and Society, the University of Bath - www.bath.ac.uk/cdas