

Living Right up to the End; an Asset-Based Community Development approach to end-of-life support

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Background

In accordance with the New Public Health Model of Palliative Care, Strathcarron Hospice recognises that with the right support, people with life limiting conditions, their carers and the bereaved can live well in their communities right to the end¹.

As a Nurture Development Learning Site, Strathcarron Hospice have adopted an Assets Based Community Development approach².

Aims

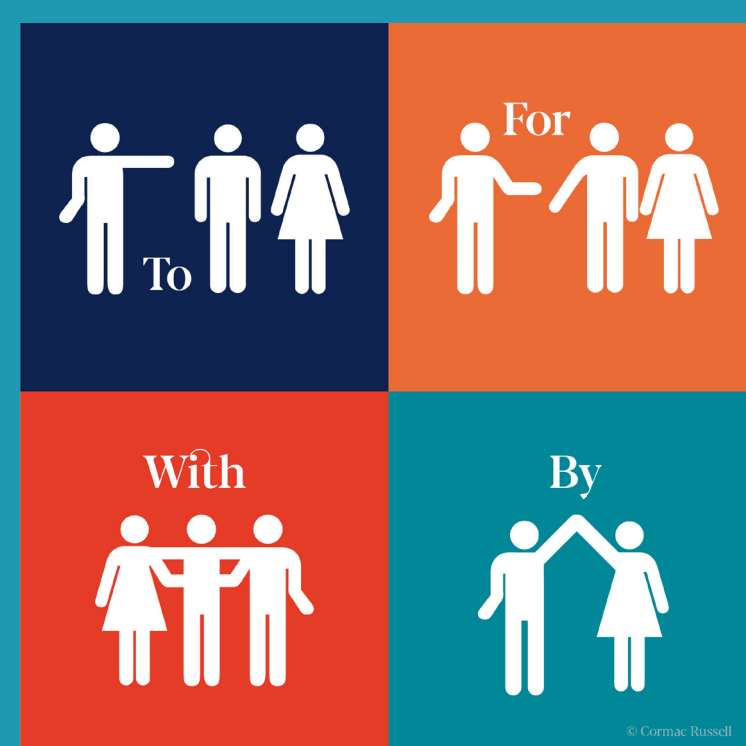
1. To develop a true partnership between citizens, communities and the Hospice.
2. To create the conditions in which citizens can discover, mobilise and connect the gifts and skills they have in abundance in order to benefit the whole community, including those living with long term conditions, their carers and the bereaved.

Methods

With funding from the National Lottery Community Fund we recruited 3 community builders to work in 3 diverse communities across Forth Valley.

The community builders;

- Identified people in the community who shared an interest or had a passion for making their community stronger or better
- Created a safe space where these people could be connected and could discover what mattered to them enough for them to take action
- Created conditions which enabled citizens and communities to discover, mobilise and connect their gifts and talents
- Explored with the community what they were able to do without outside help, what they needed a little help with, and what (if anything) they needed professionals to do for them.



“Transforming a street of strangers quietly waiting for external change, into a community of near neighbours – powerfully changing the world.” – Cormac Russell

Findings

What can a community do for themselves?

Our community builder in Denny invited people she had met to come together to “share stories about a time when you and your neighbours or community came together to make things better during lockdown” During this meeting it emerged that many of those present shared a sadness that the traditional remembrance day commemorations would not be possible due to pandemic restrictions. The group mobilised their own community to knit, crochet, draw or paint poppies which were displayed all over the town.



See the full story here:

<https://www.strathcarronhospice.net/strathcarron-compassionate-communities>

What can a community do with a little help?

People told us that they wanted to support their friends and neighbours who had been bereaved during the pandemic, but they didn’t feel they had the skills or confidence to do this. In collaboration with CRUSE Scotland we provided workshops which supported 45 people in our local communities to share their understanding of grief and grow their confidence to offer compassion to bereaved friends and neighbours.

“I feel the more we remember death as a part of life the less afraid we can feel about it.” – workshop participant



What does a community need professional help with?

A local group which supports people with learning difficulties to live actively and well in their communities approached our community builder. During the pandemic it had become apparent to them that planning for the future was important, but they lacked knowledge and confidence to do this. Strathcarron Hospice delivered an informal, interactive session for anyone in the community who wanted to attend. We shared our All About Me booklet which had been co-produced with local people as a simple way of keeping important information in one place.



References

¹ Sallnow L et al (2015) The impact of a new public health approach to end-of-life care: A systematic review. Palliative Medicine 30 (3) 200-211

² <https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/offer/learning-site/>