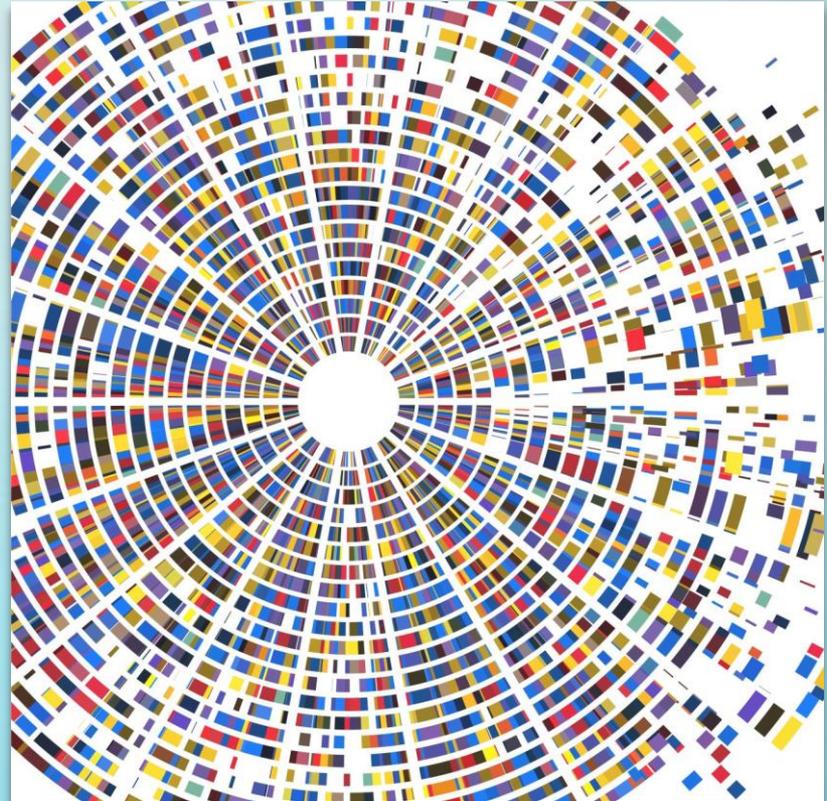


How Palliative Care Social Workers Have Adapted to Working During the Pandemic. Lessons Learnt

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The Session Will Explore

Challenges experienced during the pandemic

Magnitude of loss, isolation and grief faced by all the worlds populations

Distress and social problems caused.

Covid Deaths and Bereavement

Social Work interventions

Lessons learnt

Self Care and social work what do we have to offer

Q&A

Global Figures January 2021

- 100 million people have been infected by Covid-19
- 2.1 million people have died of Covid-19
- In England 63 qualified social workers have died of the virus
- Globally millions of health and social care workers have died of Covid -19

What are we seeing

- The rapid spread of the virus has demonstrated how interconnected we all are.
- It has put under the microscope the effects poverty, health inequalities and reduced or lack of service provision
- More child and domestic abuse
- Mental health problems due to isolation etc.
- In the UK a rich Western Country ten years of austerity resulting in a population with more underlying health problems, more poverty and a health service chronically underfunded.

Meaning for Social Workers : Truell 2021

Covid has seen social workers reclaim values and role

Community focus

Advocacy for fairer distribution of resources

Lobbying governments for social response

Advocating for social services to remain open

Managing ethical dilemmas

Innovative practice based on social work values

Reclamation of Social Work Values and role International Federation of Social Work April 2020 *Truell 2021*

- A community focus-shift from case management
- Helping communities to help themselves e.g. food banks
- Advocating for a more socially just world
- **Globally social workers are innovating.**
- Examples of setting up new systems, starting up helplines, online family counselling, homeless shelters and culturally sensitive practices
- Need to set up services which meet the new realities

Changes : Personal and Contextual in UK

- **Lockdown** measures have had major effects on individuals and their coping mechanisms
- Raised anxiety levels
- More anger and frustration
- Safeguarding issues
- Loneliness
- Breakdown of kinship communities
- No visiting
- Carer's contagion fears about going out
- Lack of touch
- Reduced services in the community. Nursing/social
- Day care facilities closed
- Luncheon Clubs closed
- Day hospices closed
- Move to online services which can discriminate
- Lack of kinship support services

Palliative Care Social Work

- Palliative Care Social Work is just emerging as a social work speciality in parts of the world
- There are great differences in education and training even in Europe
- The EAPC survey demonstrated the differences in team membership with some European Countries for example Germany and the UK having large groups of palliative care social workers whereas France had very few

Karl Bitschnau, Pam Firth, Maria Wasner 2019

Palliative Care Social Work Responses

Threats

Palliative care seen as a medical and nursing approach but EOLC needs a MDT approach

Charities have problems with fundraising during the pandemic . Some services closed

Social workers have lost their jobs, furloughed not seen as vital

Not enough PPE/Wearing PPE

Not allowed to visit families in the community because of the risks

Palliative Care Social Work Responses

Achievements

Global examples of helping people say goodbye using practical and technological interventions

Hearts, iPads, Audio recording

Memorialising in a pandemic Recognising cultures

Examples from N Ireland of sharing of basic education in EOLC and recognising dying

India, taking education out to small rural villages

Designing training for local charities, helplines= 70%rise in calls

Use of Telephone and Virtual Meetings

Adapted to online casework for individuals and families. Shorter sessions

Digital poverty is detrimental=advocacy for laptops tetc

Telephone calls providing regular conduct

Example Large London teaching hospital PCSWS offered a be the point of contact for families

Palliative Care Social Work Tools

Murray 2021



Marie Curie Research UK Dec 2020

- Since March out of 500 bereaved interviewed early on 50% reported they could not say goodbye as they wished/less likely to have visited and less likely to have had contact with friends and family after they were bereaved.
- In total so far 85% were unable to say goodbye. 75% experienced social isolation and loneliness causing prolonged and unresolved pain
- *Living in a "perpetual state of Covid Trauma"*
- At least 2.6 million people have been bereaved by a Covid death in their family or of a close friend
- Research continues more results to follow

Important issues to consider re Covid Deaths

Grief and Covid Related Deaths is a global public health concern

Disaster with casualties ++++++++ huge levels of bereaved

Commonalities between Covid deaths and disaster

Increased psychiatric conditions

Added Distress caused by The Pandemic to Family Carers

- Most carers have been hypervigilant for some time= normal
- Will have a heightened sense of danger in current situation.
- Maybe scared of becoming ill, who will care for them?
- Loss of support from other family members/ services.
- Exhaustion and powerlessness

Bereavement related to Covid-19

- Most deaths occur in traumatic circumstances
- Short illness leading to an emergency admission or
- Death in a care home.
- Dying alone at home.
- Media attention

Bereavement related to Covid-19

- Can result in not being able to say goodbye
- In the hospital or nursing home –no visiting
- Not being with the person when they die
- The way the body is treated
- Restricted funeral

Bereavement related to Covid-19

- Lack of control
- Isolation due to lockdown
- Difficult to share the experience with friends and family
- Issues about the treatment ?
- Were choices made?

What are the risk factors

- Sudden deaths
- Not seeing the body
- Multiple deaths of several generations in families
- Stigmatising deaths
- Loneliness
- Not being able to carry out cultural rituals

Worden's Tasks of Mourning

- Accept the reality of the death
- Process the pain of grief
- Adjust to the world without the person who has died
- Find an enduring connection with the person who has died

CARTOGRAPHY of GRIEF



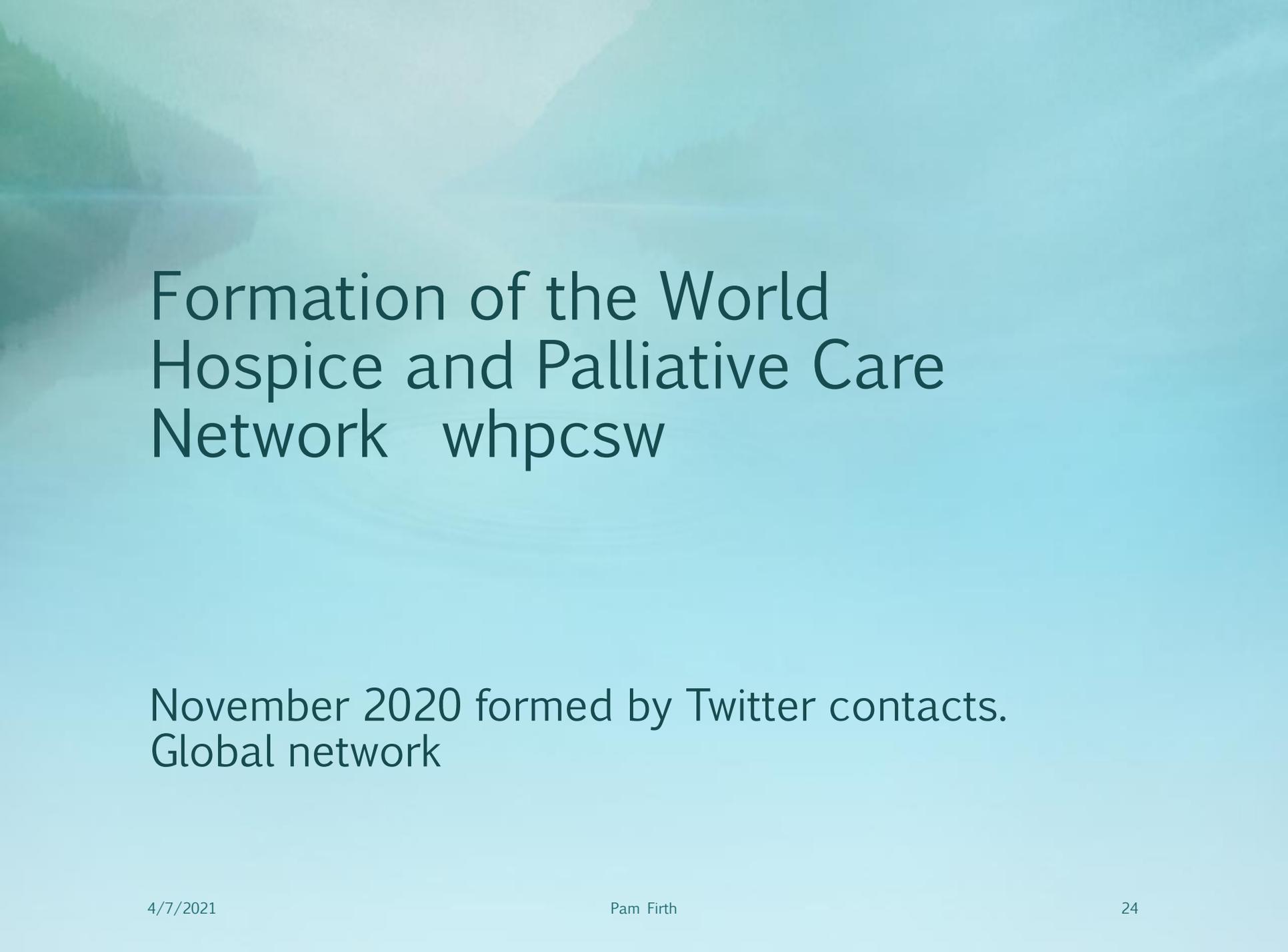
Moral Injury –A Threat

- Taken from the military. It refers to psychological distress that results from actions (or lack of them) which violate someone's moral code
- *Siobhan Maclean 2021*
- Can lead to negative thoughts about themselves or others-feelings of shame ,guilt and disgust are common.
- So,are working practices in contemporary social work organisations together with Compassion Fatigue, vicarious trauma leading practitioners to experience burnout in this pandemic?

What helps us as Social Workers

- Team working and a sense of belonging
- A strong reflective culture
- Good quality emotionally supportive supervision
- In depth reflection.
- Education about the potential of moral injury
- Importance and value of the work

Siobhan Maclean 2021



Formation of the World Hospice and Palliative Care Network whpcsw

November 2020 formed by Twitter contacts.
Global network



Love Isabel

Keep it up
Ella
Remembering

With love
John & Synne's

Dear Grandma
hope you have fun!

Talent
Love the
World

To Dear Daddy
Always love
you

Love you
Daddy

You do
love
me

Always
love
you



Memorialising

Global need

US Jan 2019 National
Memorial

Palliative Care Social Work
organisations calling for
bereavement policies

