

# **Bereavement Care 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

## **BARRIERS TO RESOLVING GRIEF**

*A conference for bereavement visitors, counsellors, clergy, family support workers, healthcare professionals, community leaders, teachers and learning support assistants.*

**NOTE:  
NEW VENUE**

### **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

### **10.00am – 3.30pm**

**St Edmund's Church, Pinner Road, Northwood Hills, Middx HA6 1QS**

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#### **Outline Programme**

- 9.30 am Arrivals and Registration (Tea & Coffee available)
- 10.00 am Welcome and Introduction
- 10.10 am Keynote Speaker: **Sandra Barefoot & Anne-Marie Cockburn ~  
The Forgiveness Project**, followed by Q & A
- 11.10 am Tea/Coffee Break
- 11.40 am Breakout Groups (1)
- 12.50 pm Lunch
- 1.50 pm Breakout Groups (2)
- 3.00 pm Top Tips from the Break-out Groups
- 3.15 pm Reflection and Close

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#### **Breakout Groups**

Delegates will be able to attend TWO Breakout Groups\* chosen from the list overleaf.

*\* Subject to availability (allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis)*

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#### **Conference fee**

**Early Bird booking before 31<sup>st</sup> August**

**£70.00** (£50.00 Special rate for Bereavement Care Corporate / Individual members)

**Standard Booking from 1<sup>st</sup> September**

**£80.00** (£55.00 Special rate for Bereavement Care Corporate / Individual members)

**Student Rate (on application)**

#### **How to book**

Please complete the Application Form and return it to:

**Conference Bookings, Bereavement Care, The Lodge, 64 Pinner Road, Harrow HA1 4HZ**

**You can also book your place by e-mail** by downloading an Application Form from our website and e-mailing it to: **admin@bereavementcareandsupport.co.uk**

Full payment should accompany all bookings. You can make payment by bank transfer (on Form), or send your cheque by post with your application.

## Keynote Speakers

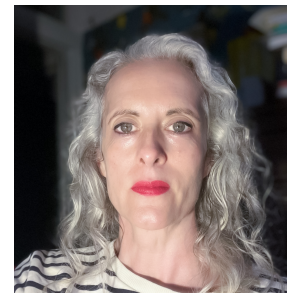
**Sandra Barefoot** is Executive Director of The Forgiveness Project, a charity that provides opportunities and resources for people to explore the complexities of forgiveness. Rooted in the belief that stories have the power to transform how we see ourselves and relate to others. Through storytelling and creative methodologies, the charity collaborates with individuals who have experienced trauma and loss. Their work is a process of exploration and inquiry, creating spaces where meaningful conversations can emerge and grow.

Sandra has over 30 years of experience of leadership, particularly in creative consultancy and programme management, group facilitation, action research, and mentoring, with specialism in multi-disciplinary arts practices. Sandra's experiences span a wide breadth of practice which began with the NHS as a qualified Nurse working in Intensive Care, to Education as a director, researcher and artist, and as lead of the Forgiveness Projects' award winning prison programme RESTORE. Over the past 16 years Sandra has worked closely with storytellers of lived experience to create workshops, courses, video podcasts and resources for a wide-reaching audience inclusive of Criminal Justice, Social and Mental Health providers, NHS, and therapists. From this work, Sandra also identified that shame frequently lies at the root of what prevents us from healing and, as a joint research fellow of the Griffin Society of Cambridge University's Department of Criminology, conducted research exploring the relationship between shame and resilience with women of lived experience of prison. Sandra subsequently created a training resource exploring how practitioners can develop a Shame Informed Approach in practice.

With a continued desire to embed conversations in diverse communities that offer hope, restoration and healing, Sandra has recently launched a new collaboration with storytellers, academics and peers called The Forgiveness Café - an online and in person initiative that offers anyone to come to discuss the complexities of forgiveness. Following her own personal experiences of bereavement, and her years of working alongside storytellers, Sandra is hoping these cafes can offer a possibility of offering new perspectives, language and support to people who are struggling with regrets and resentments especially at end-of-life care.

### Anne-Marie Cockburn

Within a few hours of the tragic death of her 15-year-old daughter, Martha Fernback, Anne-Marie Cockburn opened her laptop and wrote non-stop for 2 days. The words that poured out became the lifeline to her future as a single mum without a child. Writing became a daily ritual, her 4th emergency service, giving Anne-Marie a purpose and helping her to navigate the agonising moments of early bereavement. We join her as she embarks on the 12th year without her precious daughter and continues to use writing as a tool for healing, connection, and advocacy. Her book **5,742 Days: A Mother's Journey Through Loss** documents the first 102 days without her child. A raw, unfiltered expression of grief that marked the beginning of a new, unimaginable chapter. It invites readers to witness the horrendous decisions she had to make and the delicate moments of self-actualisation as she looks out at the world again to ask "who am I now?" Anne-Marie Cockburn is also a storyteller with The Forgiveness Project.



## Breakout Groups & Workshops

**A) The Healing Page – Anne-Marie Cockburn** offers a gentle space to explore grief through writing. Where words become witnesses, companions and tools for healing. Anne-Marie explains *"I have reached a new phase in my bereavement which I refer to as post-traumatic growth, as my life has gently reshaped around my daughter's absence. Words have kept me company, helping to fill the void and provide healing and hope as well as great joy and contentment again."* No writing experience needed, just a willingness to show up just as you are in this very moment.

**B) Surviving the Loss of Your World (SLOW) – Sian Gill and Amber Dobinson** are bereaved parents, currently facilitating group meetings for bereaved parents on behalf of the charity SLOW. Having lived experience of losing a child and now supporting others who are on the same devastating journey, Sian & Amber offer a gentle, kind, confidential and unique space to those who want to connect with others in their grief. Speaking about their experiences, feelings and thoughts, it opens a therapeutic discussion which supports those feelings mainly associated with child loss: isolation, guilt, anger, desperation, lack of hope and loneliness. SLOW's ethos is about sitting with your grief and exploring how to continue.

**C) Healthcare Chaplaincy: Help or Hindrance? – Imam Rizwan Rawat** is the head of the chaplaincy service at LNW NHS trust covering Northwick Park, Ealing, and Central Middlesex hospitals. He brings extensive experience from specialist cancer care (Mount Vernon), hospice care (Michael Sobell Hospice), acute care, and was previously a prison Chaplain at HMP Belmarsh. He emphasises listening and support, often putting

Bereavement Care, The Lodge, 64 Pinner Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 4HZ Telephone: 020 8427 5720  
admin@bereavementcareandsupport.co.uk www.bereavementcareandsupport.co.uk

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religion aside to focus on individual needs. Riz aims to change misconceptions about chaplaincy, highlighting their role in both crises and positive moments. He encourages everyone to connect with the chaplaincy team regardless of their faith, reinforcing that he and his team are there to help.

**D) Working therapeutically with 'stuckness' – Professor Deborah Rafalin** is Assistant Vice President (Education) and Professor of Counselling Psychology at City St George's, University of London. She is an HCPC Registered Psychologist and clinical supervisor who has worked therapeutically within the NHS, the third sector and private practice. She is experienced in working in a range of psychological therapy approaches with clients from diverse backgrounds with a broad range of difficulties. Deborah will be leading a break out group exploring how to work therapeutically with individuals who have become stuck in their experiences of grief, which complicate their ability to accept their loss and be able to move forward meaningfully with their lives.

**E) Grenfell and beyond: Coping with multiple complexities – Deborah Akinlawon QPM and Teresa Jimenez** Deborah Akinlawon is a retired police officer following nearly 30 years' service with the Metropolitan Police. In that time, she worked in many departments including the Murder Investigation Team. For 17 years she was a Family Liaison Officer dealing with bereaved families. For the last 8 years of her police career, her role changed to Family Liaison Advisor dealing with preparation and training for Mass Fatality incidents. In 2017, Deborah, as part of the Family Liaison Advisory Team, was responsible for the Family Liaison response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy, working on it from the first day for 4 months. Deborah is now working as Executive Director for the Christian Police Association.

Teresa Jimenez is a retired Metropolitan Police Detective with over 26 years' service. She is experienced in investigating a broad range of crimes across CID whilst on borough particularly serious sexual assault, domestic violence and child abuse as well as undertaking Family Liaison Officer deployments, one of which was 7/7. The last 10 years of her service was spent on the Family Liaison and Disaster Management Team as a Family Liaison Adviser and Disaster Victim Identification support dealing with incidents such as MH17, Tunisia, tram derailment, London Bridge and Grenfell.

**F) Barriers in supporting bereaved Children and Young People – Parminder Sahota** is Director of Clinical Services for Grief Encounter. She has over 25 years of experience working within both statutory children's services and the voluntary sector with specific experience of leading mental health support services for children and young people across London. She is passionate about supporting organisations transform to meet changing needs and promoting a greater understanding of the impact of inequality and social exclusion on children, young people and families.

**Delegates will be able to choose TWO of these Breakout Groups.**