

Using co-designed creative methods to support palliative care practitioners' wellbeing



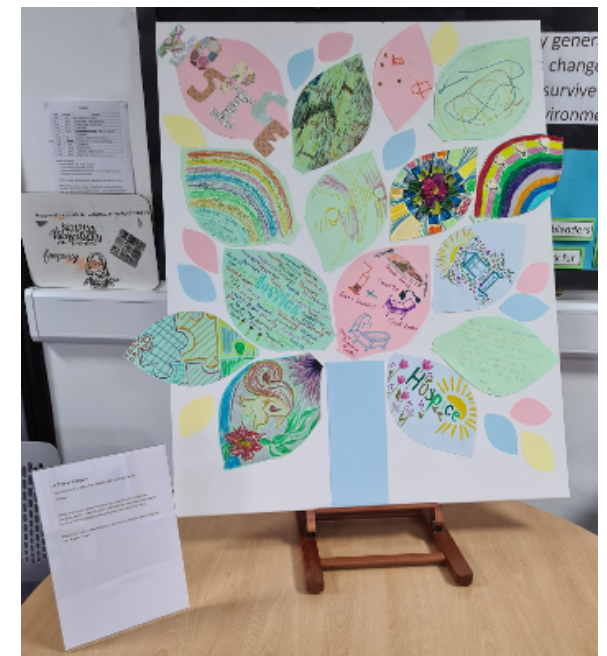
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Background

Providing palliative and end of life care during the peaks of the COVID-19 pandemic had profound negative impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of healthcare workers. Professionals reported anxiety, depression, burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and moral distress and a lack of readily available mental health support (Couper et al., 2022; Maben et al., 2022; Watts et al., 2023). This poster describes an innovative collaboration between palliative care practitioners, university lecturers, and nursing students, who co-produced a 'Creative Toolkit' to support the mental health and wellbeing of healthcare workers.

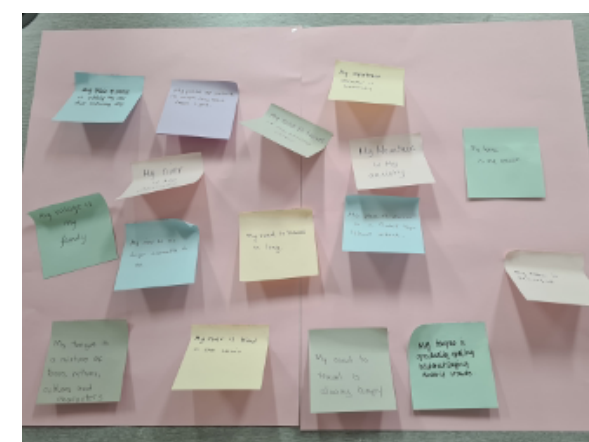
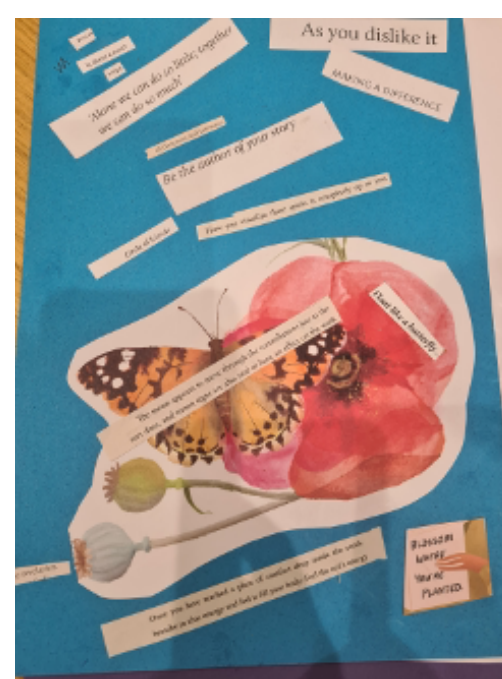


Project intern and recently qualified nurse, Kirsty Cracknell, facilitating a Creative Toolkit session at Exeter Hospiscare (left); output from the session featured in our Inspiring New Perspectives art exhibition (right).

Methods

Working iteratively, we delivered some two dozen workshops to approximately 500 attendees. Participants were invited to propose and then experiment with different creative methods that they felt would aid with relaxation, reflection, and communication, and which could be embedded in their clinical practice.

Techniques included drawing, collage, poetry, and working with clay.



Collages and sticky-note poetry produced at Creative Toolkit workshops.

Outcomes and conclusions

Participant feedback was consistently positive; sessions were described as '...really valuable to get into the headspace of non-judgemental creativity'; '...a "grounding" and "restorative" experience'; '...like [putting on] an oxygen mask before the plane goes down'. As a result of the collaboration, Hospiscare have scheduled three all-staff 'Rest and Reflection Days' using creative techniques to foster wellbeing and belonging, and have established a six-month programme of 'Creative Clinical Supervision' to introduce a creative element into required supervisory sessions. At the request of workshop attendees, we have launched, and are currently beta-testing, a Creative Toolkit website to provide a space for staff to access and share creative interventions. Our experiences show that co-production empowers staff to draw on their own practical experiences to identify interventions that suit their interests, fit in their clinical practice, and support mindful and meaningful approaches to supporting mental health in clinical settings.