

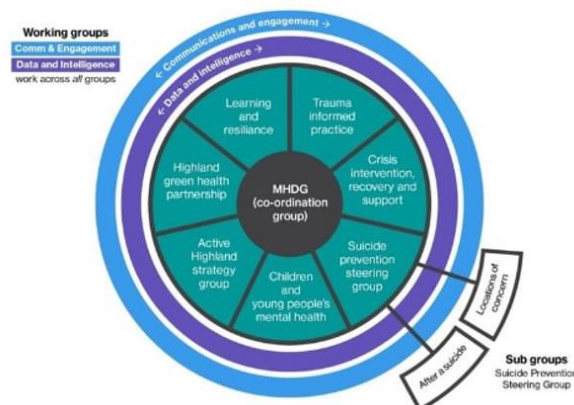


# Summer 2025 Highland Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group Newsletter

Image courtesy of Highland Hospice



"A Scotland where we all have good mental wellbeing"



## Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group (MHDG) newsletter

This edition will highlight some of the ongoing work of subgroups of the multi-agency Highland Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group.

- Learning and Resilience
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Suicide Prevention (After a Suicide)

One of Scotland's Public Health Priorities states "we want to live in a Scotland where we all have good mental wellbeing". Partners agree we can achieve this in Highland by striving together to ensure that staff, volunteers and individuals working in our communities across a raft of services and organisations, have the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in mental health and suicide prevention. By constantly developing as trauma informed organisations, services and staff, we can make sure that our support and information is accessible to anyone, no matter what their life experiences.

We hope you find this an interesting and useful read. Your feedback is sincerely welcomed and you can use this link to offer it.

### [Feedback Form](#)

Thank you to all contributors:

- Lynda Thomson, Senior Health Improvement Specialist and Chair of the Learning and Resilience working group
- Helen Perkins, Health Improvement Specialist - Programme Lead for multi-agency trauma informed practice

- All partners within the After a Suicide Working Group

## Emotional Safety Notice



This edition includes direct language related to suicide and suicide prevention. Some readers may find this content distressing.

**If you or someone you know is struggling and you are worried about your own or someone else's immediate safety:**

- Call 999 or go straight to A+E immediately.
- If you are calling for someone else, try to establish the person's, name, contact details and location

**If the crisis is not life-threatening but you are concerned for your own or somebody else's mental wellbeing:**

- Advise them to call NHS 24 on 111 or speak to their GP. The route into formal mental health services is through a GP surgery.
- If someone discloses to you that they are already being supported for their own mental health, it's useful to link them to where they are currently receiving support

### **Important Support Line Numbers and Links**

- [NHS 24](#) on 111
- [Samaritans](#) on 116 123
- [Breathing Space](#) on 0800 83 85 87 (6pm Friday – 6am Monday & 6pm – 2am on weekdays)

- [Mikeysline](#) - text and multimedia crisis support
- [Shout](#) by texting 85258
- [Clear Your Head](#) website

## In This Issue

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Training

Podcasts for Learning

Signposting to Information and Support

Trauma Informed Practice

Talking about Suicide

Continuing the Conversation about Suicide

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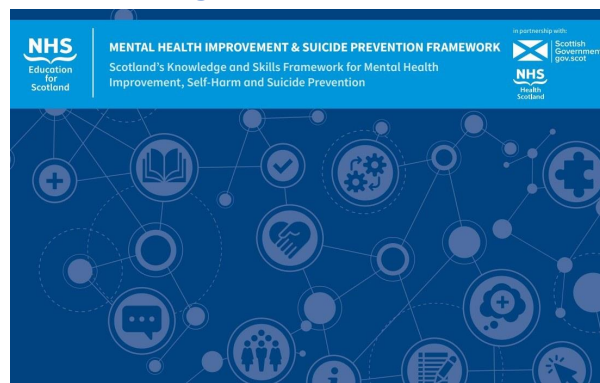
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## Learning and Resilience

### What do we mean by this?

The Learning and Resilience working group aims to essentially do 2 things. The first is to make sure we have a skilled and knowledgeable Highland workforce that, secondly, alongside the people of Highland, builds resilience in mental health and wellbeing i.e. preventing mental ill health and distress.

### The National Approach to Learning and Resilience in Mental Health and Wellbeing



## NHS Education for Scotland: Knowledge and Skills Framework

The framework sets out the value base and knowledge and skills that may be required of us as individuals, teams and organisations in meeting the priority above. The training that is provided within Highland seeks to meet these key skills and knowledge and identifies at what level the training is aimed at, which is predominantly at an informed and/or skilled level.

## The Highland Approach to Learning and Resilience in Mental Health and Wellbeing



### **We all have mental health.**

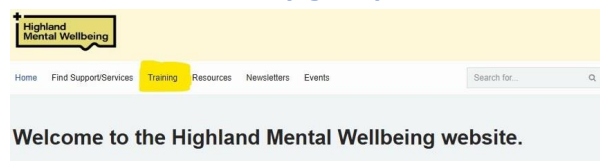
There are common themes that run through all the training in offered in Highland, and these include;

- outlining a definition of mental health. "Mental health is an integral part of health; indeed, there is no health without mental health" (World Health Organisation)
- emphasising the importance of providing "Time, Space and Compassion" for people. Acknowledging the importance of trauma informed practice in allowing people time and space to talk through what has happened for them and to give people a compassionate space to explore what they want to happen, to make decisions together and signpost people accordingly. [Time Space Compassion - supporting people experiencing suicidal crisis: introductory guide - gov.scot](#)
- everyone, staff and the people of Highland should know where to access information and support.

## Learning and Training Information



### FREE for staff/volunteers and community groups



There are several training providers across Highland, and you can find details of the training available through the Highland Mental Health and Wellbeing Website, [Training Tab](#)



NHS Highland Health Improvement Team training prospectus highlights the courses they deliver and how to book your place. Take a look and see if you can find something that is relevant for you

For further information go to: [Learning and Development for Health Improvement 2025 to 2026](#)

Some useful facts:

- Training is delivered by NHS Highland Health Improvement colleagues and other partners e.g. Highland Council, Mikeysline, Change Mental Health
- It's available to anyone working in Highland.
- Topics include: suicide prevention; mental health awareness; Scotland's Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA);



- It has subjects that address health inequalities such as e.g. poverty, discrimination which we know lead to poorer physical and mental health outcomes.
- Learning is provided through a combination of face to face, online or hybrid, but if you would prefer to do things at your own pace and speed then you may also be interested in the various e-learning opportunities available to you.



### **Public Health Scotland: Learning resources**

Public Health Scotland and NHS Education for Scotland have co-produced resources which can support learning from the informed right up to specialist level.

To access the resources, you need to first register on the training portal Turas Learn. To do this use the link: [Home | Turas | Learn](#), create a password for yourself and then you can have a look at the resources available.

Once you have access to the Turas Learn portal search under Mental health improvement, and prevention of self-harm and suicide to find all the learning resources available here.

You can also access and book onto the course provided through NHS Highland health improvement team under the public health zone.

To find out more about Turas Learn use the link: [Health Improvement training | NHS Highland](#)

### **Podcasts as Learning Opportunities**

Podcasts can be a useful learning space and create food for thought. People find them;

- Convenient and accessible
- Informed by lived and living experience
- Opportunity to reflect on a range of perspectives

Here are a couple of examples:



Speaking of Suicide highlights the real stories and struggles of mental health and suicide. Presented and produced by Pennie Stuart from Adventurous Audio Ltd, the series expresses honesty, openness and vulnerability. It's a chance for those who have struggled to share their story and for those listening to know they're not alone. Speaking of Suicide podcast is available on all streaming platforms.

#### [Speaking of Suicide](#)



*Creating Hope* is now live and explores a range of issues that people working in suicide prevention may find helpful.

Episodes include working with people who have lived and living experience, using data and evidence, support for people bereaved, and how to work with young people.

#### [Creating Hope Podcasts](#)



## Signposting to Information and Support



The Highland Mental Health and Wellbeing website, a one-stop shop of information on services, training, events and other resources. If you haven't had a look at the website or used it already then take the time now to have a look.

### [Highland Mental Wellbeing – A collection of resources to support mental wellbeing](#)

On the Highland Mental Wellbeing website you will be able to find a wealth of information and local services supporting communities across Highland.

**FIND A SERVICE**, has a filter option to help you narrow down your search and find the right support for you, in your area.

**TRAINING** section provides information about training available around the Highlands, provided by many different organisations covering various topics.

**RESOURCES**, a broad range of free downloadable resources and apps covering themes such as stress, grief, money worries, mental distress and suicide.

**EVENTS** tab aims to highlight upcoming training and events. It needs you, in local areas, to tell us what's planned, so please tell us about it so it can be shared for the benefit of all concerned. You'll find a contact form in the next section: Spread the Word.

**NEWSLETTERS**, all editions of the newsletter will be uploaded on the website. They are packed with information and resources.



We also highlight in our Suicide Intervention and Prevention Training the really helpful Highland Prevent Suicide App which provides helpful info for those affected in any way by

suicide, extensive contact details for services across the Highland area as well as allowing users to create their own safety plan.

**My Safety Plan**

**Prevent Suicide Highland**

QR code linking to the app, with 'Available on the App Store' and 'GET IT ON Google Play' logos.

**Remember: Help is always available.**

**In the event of a crisis:**  
1st Emergency Contact: Samaritans 116 123,  
Mikeysline Text: 07786 207755 Sun to Thurs 6pm – 10pm, Fri and Sat 7pm-7am  
NHS24 111  
Call Emergency Services: 999

- 1** My warning signs are: \*These can be thoughts, feelings or behaviors that indicate you are at risk.
- 2** Things i can do to take my mind off my problems are: \*These are things you can do to help lift your mood, like meditation or exercise.
- 3** People and places i can go to for distraction:
- 4** People i can ask for help:
- 5** Professionals or services i can contact in crisis:
- 6** Steps i can take to make my environment safer. Please list:

Can't find the training you are looking for?

Highland Mental Health Delivery  
Group, Newsletter Registration,  
Website Updates + Feedback



There's a lot on offer that hopefully you'll be able to find learning opportunities to meet your needs, but if you can't or you identify a gap. then please feel free to tell us using [this form](#) or contact [nhsh.healthimprovementtraining@nhs.scot](mailto:nhsh.healthimprovementtraining@nhs.scot).

Also importantly, if you are an organisation that provides training and it is not captured on the website or needs updating then please let us know using the same form.

## Trauma Informed Practice



### What do we mean by Trauma Informed Practice?

Safety	•Creating Physical and psychological security for all
Trust	•Maximising trust amongst staff , services users and the wider community
Choice	•Considering individual choice and giving people control, informing of other options available
Collaboration	•Power differences are levelled and decisions are shared
Empowerment	•Recognising and building on strengths and resilience of individuals
Cultural Consideration	•Moving past cultural stereotypes and biases

Trauma informed practice is based on 6 key values: safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration. The values aim to create supportive spaces and services that reduce the risk of re-traumatisation and support recovery for anyone affected by trauma. These values offer a chance to develop trusting relationships and ensure that everyone, regardless of circumstances and experience, can access the help or service they need when they need it.

A trauma informed approach looks beyond a persons difficulties and asks them "what do you need"?

## Trauma is everyone's business



Trauma is an emotional response as a result of a distressing experience or series of events. It can overwhelm a person's ability to cope. It can affect a person's sense of safety and how they interact with the world and can affect relationships due to difficulties with trust and communication.

Here in Scotland, the message is "Trauma is everyone's business". Everyone has a role to play in understanding and responding to those affected by trauma. This doesn't mean that everyone needs to be a trauma expert, different expertise and skills are required to support people's recovery, but it does mean that we all have a unique and essential trauma informed role to play in our workplaces and communities.

WATCH - 8 MINUTES

### Trauma Informed Practice in Action

#### Example 1



**"Understanding more what barriers we unwittingly put in people's way gives us more chance to remove them"**

*Judith Robertson, Executive Director, Befrienders Highland Ltd*

"Befrienders Highland has been working in the Highlands for over 30 years supporting volunteers to provide weekly befriending with people facing mental health issues and experiencing social isolation and loneliness across this remote and rural region.

Many of the lessons of a trauma-informed approach, when we came to understand them, were ones that unwittingly we had already learned; the need to give people **choice** to build **empowerment**, help people feel **safe** by being **trustworthy**, consistent and clear in our boundaries, and offering an inclusive, non-judgemental service that builds on people's strengths and supports people where they are at.

We have taken the same approach to the support we give our amazing volunteers. At the moment we have over 120 volunteers from all over the Highlands who provide weekly one-to-one befriending service through face-to-face meet ups, telephone calls, email or letters. Volunteers are matched with people according to interests, locale and general compatibility. We check regularly to see how things are going and in **collaboration** with people, if they want something to change, including their befriender, we strive to make that happen. This is a bespoke service led by the needs of people who join up.

Turns out when we started the journey on taking a trauma informed approach we were already a bit of a way down the road – we just didn't know that. Making what we do more conscious is only helping. Understanding more what barriers we unwittingly put in people's way gives us more chance to remove them and bringing our friends and volunteers into those discussions is giving us real insight and opportunity to change.

The training we have received from Jenny Munro and Helen Perkins of NHS Highland has really helped get us going and we look forward to the journey ahead."

Read on to find out more about training opportunities on offer.

### Example 2



**"The packs aimed to reduce stigma and respect everyone's right to dignity"**

Cat Clark, NHS Highland, Specialist Midwife

With thanks to small grant funding from Police Scotland, "maternity comfort packs" were made available in the maternity department in Raigmore Hospital in March 2025. There are links between trauma, substance use, poverty and complications in pregnancy, such as pre-term birth, which can result in emergency or unscheduled attendance at hospital without personal belongings or means to getting basic supplies.

By providing comfort at a time when women are likely to feel vulnerable or isolated, the packs aimed to reduce stigma and respect everyone's right to dignity. Each bag includes (in a range of sizes), a dressing gown, pyjamas, slippers, socks, pants, a water bottle, and wash bag with a wide range of toiletries for mum. Further funding is being pursued to sustain this well-received initiative.

### **National Trauma Training Programme**



This website provides access to evidence-based training, tools and guidance. It aims to support everyone, in all sectors of the workforce, to know how to adapt the way we work to make a positive difference to anyone who has been impacted by psychological trauma and adversity.

To find out more about the National Trauma Training Programme go to this website [National Trauma Training Programme](#) or contact [Helen.Perkins2@nhs.scot](mailto:Helen.Perkins2@nhs.scot), Programme Co-ordinator for Trauma Informed Practice , NHS Highland.

# What if a Conversation about Suicide Could Save a Life?

## Scotland's Suicide Prevention Campaign



The new national campaign features four people with lived and living experience of suicide, each of whom agreed to share their story having been bereaved by, attempted or actively considered suicide. The campaign highlights that we need to normalise talking about suicide and give people the confidence to have a conversation that might just save someone's life.

Alongside the campaign, a new website with a range of information, resources and a new local services directory is available at [suicideprevention.scot](https://suicideprevention.scot).

## Highland: Let's Continue the Conversation



**The multi-agency 'After a Suicide' sub-group is made up of local providers/organisations whose work either focuses on or work closely with providers of mental health, suicide prevention support and or bereavement services.**

We're proud to share the launch of the 'After a Suicide' resources, dedicated to improving the responses to those affected by suicide—whether directly bereaved or impacted in other ways.

### Why This Matters

Losing someone to suicide can have a profound and lasting impact. Research from University College London (2016) shows that close family and friends bereaved by suicide are 65%



more likely to attempt suicide or experience mental health challenges. The ripple effects can extend to workplaces, schools, and entire communities.

### **What the Project Aims to Do**

The resources focus on:

- Improving communication and support for those bereaved or affected.
- Reducing suicide risk and improving mental health outcomes.
- Raising awareness of the wider impact of suicide.
- Educating communities and workplaces on how to respond compassionately.
- Tackling stigma to prevent isolation and promote healing.

### **What's Been Developed?**

- A resource pack for next of kin and families bereaved by suicide.
- A leaflet for the general public, available in community spaces and workplaces.
- A suite of films featuring lived experience voices, designed to educate, train, and raise awareness across different audiences.

These resources will offer practical guidance, signposting to local support services, and help individuals understand how they can support others in the aftermath of a suicide.

### **Join Us in Breaking the Silence**



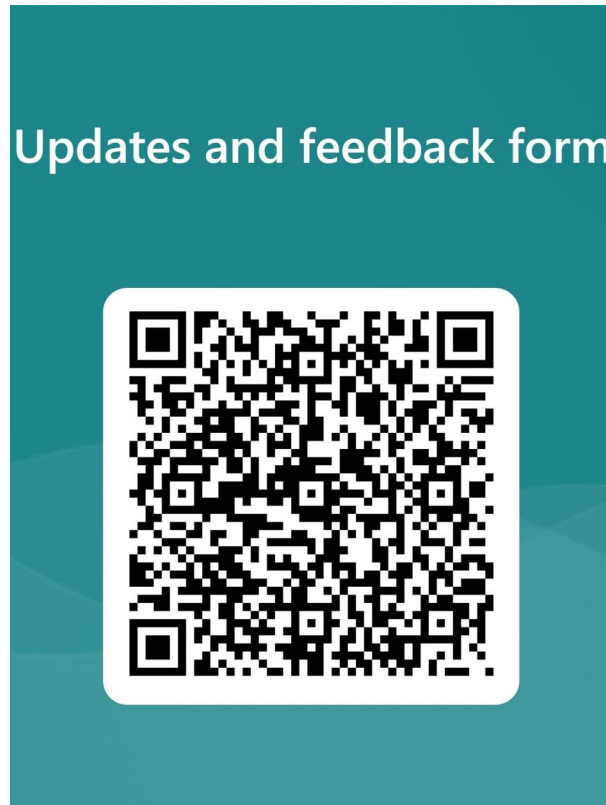
**"By fostering understanding and compassion, we hope to build stronger, more supportive communities where no one feels alone in their grief".**

*Chair of the After a Suicide working group*

A series of community events are taking place across Highland to showcase the films and other local supports. The wider work of the Highland Suicide Prevention Steering Group will also be shared and people's feedback sought. Please come along if you can and give partners your feedback.

All dates will be published in the press and partners social media pages. You will also find them on the events page of the [Highland Mental Wellbeing website](#).

## Updates and Feedback



This newsletter is produced by NHS Highland - Health Improvement Team, on behalf of the Highland Community Planning Partnership (HCPP) Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group.

### **UPDATES**

No matter where in Highland you live or work, whether you organise/lead/attend a service, activity or training, please allow us to help you share information about it through this newsletter and the Highland Mental Health and Wellbeing Website.

### **FEEDBACK**

Help us improve this newsletter please. What was good? What could be better?

[Updates and Feedback Form](#)

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Group (MHDG) Explained



The MHDG is one of 3 regional sub groups of the [Highland Community Planning Partnership](#) (HCPP). The partnership brings together public agencies, third sector organisations and other key community groups to work collaboratively with the people of Highland to deliver better outcomes.

Other regional groups:

- [Poverty Reduction](#)
- [Community Safety and Resilience](#)

### AIM - ALL PEOPLE IN HIGHLAND WILL BENEFIT FROM GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

This multi agency group is chaired by Cathy Steer, Head of Health Improvement NHS Highland and is committed to

- Sharing best practice, ideas and resources, avoiding duplication of effort
- Act as a coordinating group for delivery of the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention priorities including the Creating Hope Together in Highland action plan.
- Developing an action plan that reflects identified need as highlighted via services from people with lived experience and from data provided both nationally and locally
- Ensuring the people around the virtual table represent the range of activities and services from communities across all [9 local community partnership areas](#).





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*Click on the images to see all partners*

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