

Confidentiality Matters: Working Well with Family Carers of People Experiencing Acute Mental Health Crises

Thursday 23rd April 2026

Virtual Masterclass



Facilitated by:

Dorit Braun

Lived Experience Speaker

Dr Karen Lascelles

*Senior Lecturer for Mental
health Nursing*

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COURSE OUTLINE

Confidentiality is frequently seen as a key barrier to clinicians working effectively with the family and friends of people experiencing a mental health crisis. This half day interactive course examines misconceptions about confidentiality and information sharing and offers suggestions for ways to develop your practice to offer more support and information to family and friends carers so that they are more confident about what they can reasonably do to keep their family member safe.

We use the term family carers to mean anyone who is significant to the patient, including biological and non biological family and friends who may or may not live in the same household or even the same country.

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

There is a great deal of guidance that expects clinicians to involve the families of people during and following an acute mental health crisis. And yet, Coroner's Prevention of Future Deaths reports, and investigations following homicides when the perpetrator had a diagnosed mental illness, regularly point to the lack of meaningful engagement of the family, the failure to listen to their views, experiences and needs, or to offer them support and information to keep their family member safe. [Martha's rule](#), which is to be extended to mental health services, also requires good working relationships with families. Making Families Count Life Beyond the Cubicle project was funded by NHS England (HEE South East Region legacy funds). The project's resources were co-created with patients, family carers and clinicians, tested in eleven NHS Trusts, and independently evaluated. The resources have been shown to encourage clinicians to work well with family carers in order to improve care, avoid harm and reduce deaths.

The project involved working with clinicians, service users/patients and family carers to identify areas for improvement, barriers to improvement and ways to address these barriers. A key barrier is patient confidentiality. This interactive course addresses barriers to information sharing, considers the nuances around information that can and cannot be shared and when information sharing should override confidentiality. Ways in which discussions about confidentiality can be an ongoing process will be explored and these discussions will be set within the legal framework and best practice.

The Life Beyond the Cubicle eLearning resources are available free to health and social care professionals via the [NHS England eLearning platform](#). NHS Trusts can download the modules and upload them to their own Learning and Development system.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This course is suitable for anyone working in Health and Social Care whose work brings them into direct contact with someone experiencing a mental health crisis. This includes psychiatrists, nurses, ED service leads, social workers, occupational therapists who have all benefitted from this training.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will

- Reflect on how concerns about patient confidentiality impact on their relationships with patients and with family carers
- Consider ways and processes to negotiate confidentiality concerns with patients
- Reflect on the differences between information sharing, information gathering and confidentiality
- Reflect on a variety of case studies and scenarios that explore the complex issues around confidentiality
- Explore the complexity of family relationships and how these impact on who may and may not be safe to share information with
- Consider the balance of risks between sharing confidential information and keeping patients, families, staff and the public safe
- Learn about the legal framework for patient confidentiality and safety

FACILITATORS

Dr Karen Lascelles

Karen Lascelles has been a mental health nurse for over 30 years, always with an interest in self-harm and suicide and she has specialised in this area for the last 15 years. She currently works as a senior lecturer for mental health nursing at Oxford Brookes University, whilst also maintaining a clinical role in psychiatric liaison. In her previous role as nurse consultant, she was involved in supporting colleagues with complex cases, working clinically with people experiencing suicidal crises and their family members or carers, supporting families and carers bereaved by suicide and supporting staff after the death of a patient by suicide.

Karen has been involved in various research projects related to suicide and suicide prevention, and in education and training about suicide risk assessment and management. Her professional doctorate investigated the experiences and support needs of adults who care for an adult family member or friend at risk of suicide.

Dr Dorit Braun

Following a very traumatic family bereavement, Dorit Braun has been active in trying to improve mental health care and the ways NHS staff and organisations learn from deaths.

Before her retirement in 2019, she worked as a Charity Chief Executive and in a variety of senior management and governance roles in the social care and family support sectors. Her background is in adult and community education, and in family and parenting support.

Dorit joined Making Families Count in 2020. She is the co-ordinator of the Life Beyond the Cubicle project. She has contributed to webinars, training and development events and conferences as an expert by experience.

Dorit and Karen led the development of the Life Beyond the Cubicle resources.

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

09:30am REGISTRATION

09:45am Welcome and introductions

10.00am What do we believe about when we can and cannot breach confidentiality

10.15am Scenarios: a range of cases to consider how best to respond to family carers

10:45am COMFORT BREAK AND VIRTUAL NETWORKING

11:00am Scenario: negotiating confidentiality

11.30am Scenario: breaking confidentiality

12.00pm Scenario: confidentiality and domestic abuse

12.20pm The Caldicott Guardian principles: film and discussion

12.40pm The legal framework summary of what you can and can't share

12.50pm Feedback and evaluation

13.00pm CLOSE

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Venue

This is a virtual masterclass, with private login details to further online resources and interactive content. Log in details will be sent one week before the event.

Date

☐ Thursday 23rd April 2026

Virtual Fee

☐ £195 + VAT for NHS, Social care, private healthcare organisations and universities.

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