

Safety Planning

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

Thursday 7th May 2026

Virtual Masterclass



Facilitated by:

Dr Karen Lascelles

Senior Lecturer for Mental Health Nursing

Dorit Braun

Lived Experience Speaker

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COURSE OUTLINE

The new NHS England guidance [Staying Safe from Suicide](#); confirms that risk cannot and should not be measured using risk scales, and that any such scales are dangerously misleading. A more helpful and hopeful perspective is to think about the safety of people who might at times feel suicidal. This includes engaging in collaborative safety planning with patients and their family carers. This interactive half day course uses video and audio case studies to examine why safety planning is so important, and explores practical ideas about how meaningful and feasible safety planning can be carried out with family carers.

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 in order to improve care, avoid harm and reduce deaths.

The project worked with clinicians, service users/patients and family carers to identify areas for improvement, barriers to improvement and ways to address these barriers. All too often, patients are discharged from hospital inpatient stays, or from an ED with safety/care plans that have not included or been adequately discussed with family carers. Family members often feel their concerns have not been taken into account, and have reported that their role in keeping their family member safe is not always clear, understood or even practical.

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 but is not limited to psychiatrists, nurses, ED service leads, social workers, occupational therapists and peer support workers.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will

- Learn what safety planning means in current policy and guidance
- Consider the perspectives of family carers about their role in keeping someone at risk safe
- Explore how the needs and feelings of family carers impact on their caring abilities and on their lives
- Examine the balance of rights and responsibilities between family carers, patients/service users and clinicians
- Explore how best to obtain and share information in situations where people may be fearful of speaking and fearful of their family member
- Reflect on clinicians' feelings and experiences of working with patients in crisis and how these can influence practice
- Consider how language informs expectations by families, patients/service users and clinicians and what can be done about that

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

09.30 REGISTRATION

09.45 Welcome and introductions

10.00 What's the problem: why safety planning and who is it relevant to

10.15 What can go wrong: a scenario to explore ways safety planning can go wrong and how it might be improved

10.45 Family perspectives: scenarios and research to explore what the family experiences can be, how and why this matters and what it means for clinical practice

11.15 COMFORT BREAK AND VIRTUAL NETWORKING

11.30 Balancing rights and responsibilities: case study videos to explore disagreements and risks in family dynamics

12.00 Clinicians' perspectives: case study videos to explore clinicians' experiences and needs and what these mean for practice and services

12.30 Guidance and policy and what they mean for practice

12.45 Reflections, feedback and evaluation

13.00 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 7th May 2026

Virtual Fee

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

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