

Improving perinatal bereavement care through training: evaluation of the SUPPORT course

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Background:

SUPPORT is a one-day course for healthcare professionals, encompassing the breadth of perinatal loss; miscarriage, termination for fetal anomalies, stillbirth and neonatal death.

Attendees' confidence, factual recall and applied knowledge were assessed through pre- and post-course surveys, addressing level 1 and 2 of the Kirkpatrick Model of Evaluation; reaction and learning.

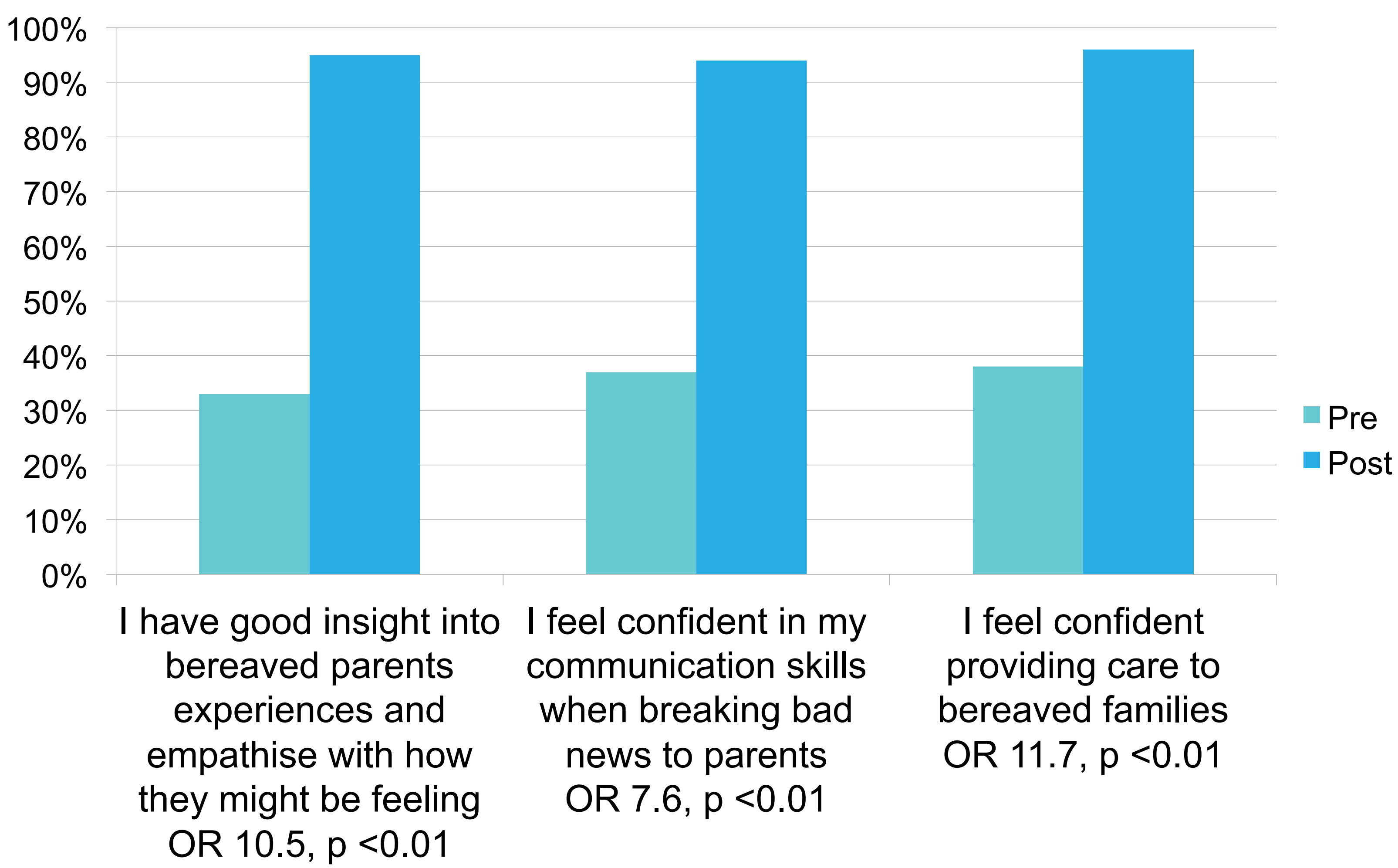


Figure 1. Proportion of respondents that agree or strongly agree with self-assessment statements pre- and post-course

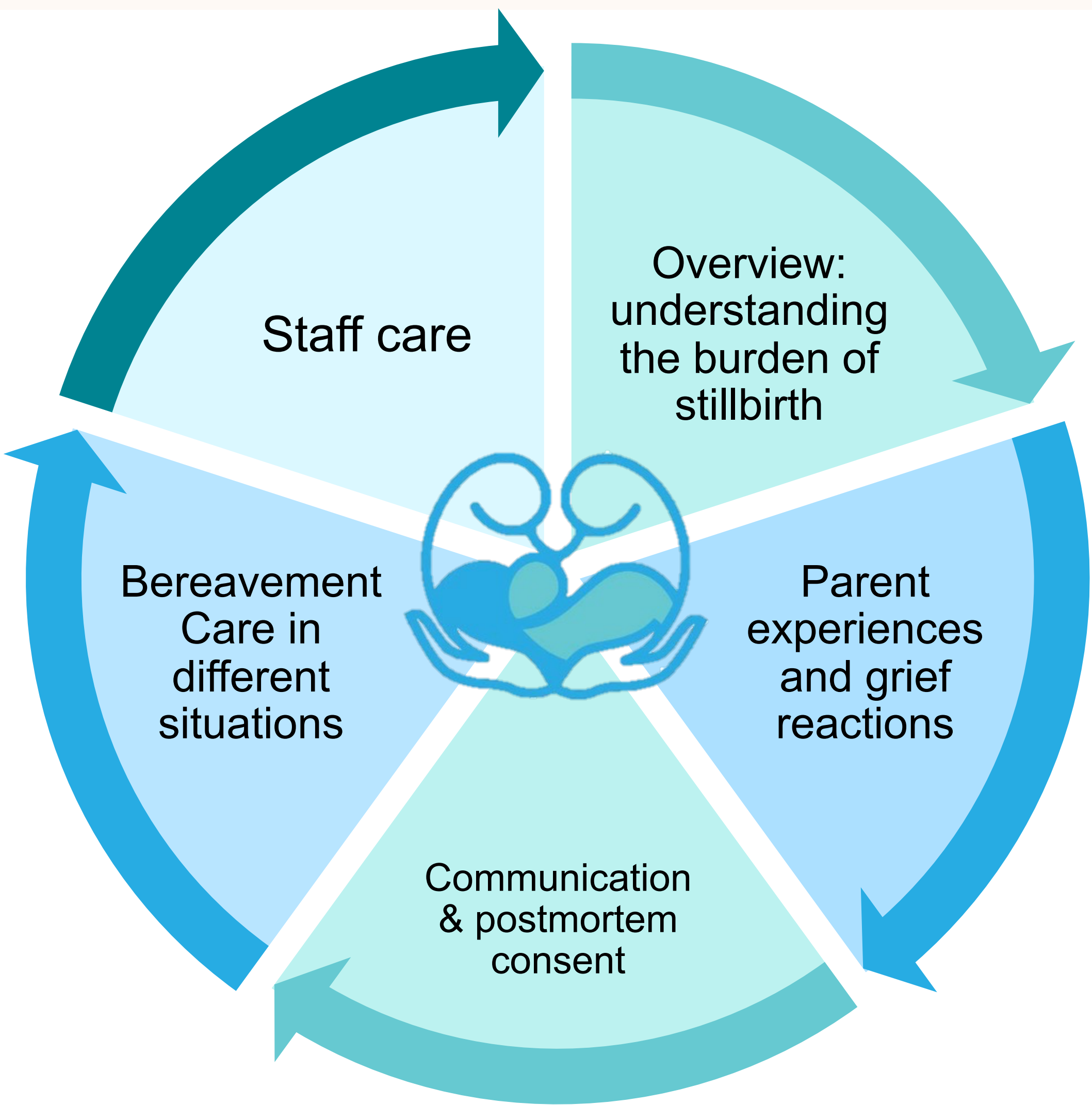


Figure 2. SUPPORT course modules

The course uses a blend of learning modalities; traditional lecture-style talks, interactive workshops, panel discussions and time for guided reflection.

Figure 3. Course attendee professions



Figure 4. Number of surveys completed



Improved factual recall

Participants correctly identified the highest-yield investigation for stillbirth causation in a scenario more often (36% vs. 62%, OR 5.75 p<0.01).

Improved applied clinical knowledge

Attendees were asked 3 applied clinical questions, and their responses were graded. Post-course, a slightly higher proportion was able to extensively describe considerations for communication when discussing a stillbirth diagnosis with parents (22% vs. 25%, OR 2.0 p0.20). Importantly, participants were better at balancing provision of bereavement care with staff wellbeing, although potential remains for improvement in both areas (22% vs. 42%, OR 5.25 p<0.01).

Conclusions and next steps:

- There is strong evidence of improvement in staff attitudes and confidence.
- Further assessment of impact on parent experience is needed
- In line with the UK Bereavement Care Pathway, steps should be taken to train all relevant professionals in bereavement care

