

SEEDS OF HOPE: SUPPORTING HEALING AND CONNECTION AFTER PERINATAL LOSS



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INTRODUCTION

The Seeds of Hope group was developed to address the lack of accessible, trauma-informed support for women and birthing people navigating pregnancy after perinatal loss. Co-produced by multidisciplinary clinicians and lived experience practitioners within Helix Maternal Mental Health Service (MMHS) and co-facilitated with the Trust's Perinatal Mental Health Service (PMHS), the group provides a safe, compassionate, and empowering space to explore grief, anxiety, hope, and uncertainty, strengthen emotional regulation, and foster peer connection. Preliminary feedback indicates participants experience greater validation, safety, and empowerment.

METHODS

The Seeds of Hope programme is a six-week, trauma-informed, psychoeducational group, co-produced by lived experience practitioners and Helix MMHS clinicians. It is co-facilitated by Helix MMHS clinicians alongside the Trust's PMHS.

Therapeutic Approaches

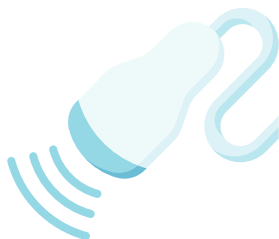
Evidence-based approaches used in the programme include:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) → *Supports emotional regulation and coping*
- Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT) → *Fosters self-kindness and reduces self-criticism*
- Narrative Practices → *Processes grief and encourages reflection on personal experiences*
- Attachment-informed approaches → *Strengthens relational understanding and connection*



Specialist Midwife Support

Dedicated antenatal support, especially for participants who have experienced challenges or bias in previous maternity care.



Participant Feedback

Collected via post-group surveys, reflections, and pre/post outcome measures:

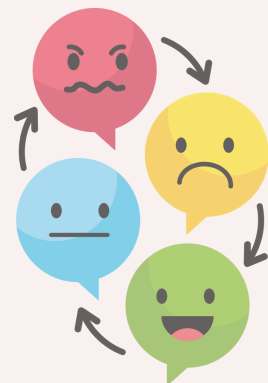
- PTSD Checklist for DSM-5 (PCL-5)
- Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation - 10 (CORE-10)
- Perinatal Anxiety Screening Scale (PASS)

RESULTS/OUTCOME

Participants' experiences highlighted three key areas of impact:

Emotional Wellbeing

"I learned to identify and name my feelings, which helped me cope and feel less overwhelmed."



Peer Connection

"I felt understood and supported by others who had similar experiences."

Feeling Heard

"I felt acknowledged and that my loss was truly valued and heard."



Preliminary Quantitative Findings

- Participants showed improvements in emotional wellbeing and reductions in low mood and anxiety, as measured by the PCL-5, CORE-10 and PASS.
- Early results indicate that the Seeds of Hope programme supports coping, strengthens emotional regulation, and enhances participants' psychological safety.

CONCLUSION

The Seeds of Hope group shows the value of co-produced, trauma-informed support for women and birthing people navigating pregnancy after loss. By fostering collaboration between clinicians and lived experience practitioners, the group provides a safe and inclusive space. Participants reported greater emotional wellbeing, empowerment, and connection. Feedback and ongoing evaluation continue to guide service development and ensure sustainability.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Weathers et al. (2013) PCL-5; Barkham et al. (2012) CORE-10; Somerville et al. (2014) PASS; Royal College of Psychiatrists (2017) Attachment Theory; Gilbert (2010) CFT. Image credits: Canva stock images. We thank the participants of the Seeds of Hope group, and the Oxleas NHS FT and PMHS for their support. For more information, please contact: oxl-tr.helix@nhs.net