



**PLAN
CARE
HEAL**

A guide to working with
spontaneous memorial collections

Working with victims and bereaved family members

Learning Objective

Identify the challenges of working with grieving family members and how to look after your own wellbeing in the process

Identify any training required to prepare for working directly with those most affected

Scenario Summary

LOCATION: IN THE ARCHIVE

You manage a spontaneous memorial collection, which formed in the city centre following a terrorist attack at a concert hall. Several years into your work with this collection, one of the victims' mothers contacts you via email.

In this email, she expresses her continued grief at the death of her daughter and explains how she is struggling to come to terms with her loss. Concluding that her grief is still very raw, she makes a request for the archive to locate any memorial objects specifically connected to her daughter and to forward them to her home address. She believes having these objects at home will offer her comfort.

Key Considerations

- Talking to the bereaved is always challenging and in this case the mother is still clearly grieving, what role should the archive play in the support and guidance needed here?
- How equipped are you to deal with complicated and distressing conversations?
- Can you identify any training or CPD that would prepare you for this scenario?
- Are there any considerations here concerned with access to the archive, ownership, and data protection?

Further training, support, and key readings

Wright, Kirsten, and Nicola Laurent (2021) [Safety, Collaboration, and Empowerment: Trauma-Informed Archival Practice](#)

Collins, H., Allsopp K., Arvanitis, K., Chitsabesan, P., and French P (2020) [Psychological impact of spontaneous memorials: A narrative review](#)

Bown, C (2023) [Cultivating healing spaces: Trauma-informed practice in museums](#)

Greater Manchester Resilience Hub [Helping people affected by trauma](#)