

Trevor Stevens

Inspirational Story – Affected By

Trevor Stevens has made an exceptional contribution to NSFT through his courageous and generous sharing of lived experience following the tragic death of his daughter, Tobi, who was in our care in 2020.

He has worked closely with us on initiatives like the Listening into Action Think Family and Carer programme, helping to shape meaningful improvements in how we involve families and carers.

His insight, compassion, and clarity have brought emotional depth and urgency to complex discussions around confidentiality and communication, leading to tangible, life-saving changes.

Trevor has had national impact through his work with Making Families Count - writing compelling blogs, speaking at major conferences, delivering training, and representing bereaved families at a national level.

His voice is respected across the system, and his presence brings authenticity and focus to every conversation. Trevor's commitment to change, locally and nationally, is deeply valued. He continues to inspire us to do better, for families and patients.

Trevor's daughter Tobi took her own life in December 2020 while in the care of Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust. When Tobi was at home with her family during the pandemic, from March to September 2020, she gave no clue to them that she was struggling with her mental health. When she was back at university in Norwich on her own, her mental health deteriorated rapidly and before she died, she took several overdoses. Her family were not informed of Tobi's struggles with her mental health.

Trevor's focus since Tobi's death has been to tell her (and her parents') story, highlighting the importance of including families in the treatment of young people with mental health problems – recognising that this is a potentially life-saving approach.

Trevor's goal is to tell Tobi's story to as many people as possible so that some of them at least reconsider their opinion on confidentiality, change their behaviour and as a result save someone's life.

Trevor's experience stems from a personal tragedy. Trevor and his wife were bereaved of their daughter, Tobi, in December 2020. When she was back at university in Norwich on her own, her mental health deteriorated rapidly and before

she died, she took several overdoses. Her family were not informed of Tobi's struggles with her mental health.

It takes an incredibly courageous person to turn that pain into purpose, and that is exactly what Trevor has done. He has channelled his grief, determined to make a difference so that no other family should experience the same pain. He has dedicated himself to improving services, including services his daughter was not supported by, to better involve families and carers and deal with matters around confidentiality.

With a career spent teaching in schools and later working as a publisher and trainer for educational publishers, Trevor brings a wealth of experience in communication, facilitation and education. He navigates difficult conversations while maintaining compassion and empathy towards the challenges staff face, but brings a grounding reality that encourages reflection, learning and meaningful change.

One way he has demonstrated this is through the Think Family and Carer project at NSFT.

Through the Think Family and Carer Project, Trevor's involvement has had impact in the following ways:

- Trevor has been a beacon of insight and compassion within the Think Family Team, consistently reminding us of the deeper purpose behind our work. His contributions go beyond professional input - they are rooted in lived experience, empathy, and a profound understanding of the human connections that shape recovery and resilience.
- Trevor's words have inspired the team to reframe our approach. Instead of seeing carer involvement as a checkbox, we now see it as a vital, ethical, and compassionate act. His perspective has helped us recognise that excluding carers can inadvertently silence voices that matter most in a person's care and recovery and could potentially save lives.
- Trevor reframes the conversation. Instead of justifying why carers should be involved, he challenges us to justify why they wouldn't be. It shifts the burden of proof and places the emphasis on inclusion as the default, not the exception.
- His question reminds us that carers are not peripheral - they are central. They hold knowledge, context, and emotional insight that professionals may not always see. Trevor's question is more than a prompt - it's a principle. It encourages us to lead with empathy and to value lived experience.

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Making Families Count is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC) focused on improving outcomes for families affected by serious harm and traumatic bereavement in health and social care. They provide training and resources for healthcare professionals, aiming to ensure families are integral to investigations, leading to better care and support. Rosi Reed, Development and Training Co-ordinator for Making Families Count, says:

"Trevor Stevens joined Making Families Count in 2023, only three years after his beloved daughter Tobi died by suicide. At that early point, we didn't want to overload him or contribute to his distress, but he was keen to work with us and very responsive. He began by writing a series of outstanding pieces for the blog page on our website. At the end of 2023 he worked with me on the Making Families Count exhibition stand at the HSJ Patient Safety Congress which he found extremely interesting. By the following year he had become a regular presenting speaker for our webinars, was briefly involved in our work with Autism Oxford, running training for teachers working with autistic people with suicidal ideation. In 2024 he began to speak at our face-to-face training events at mental health trusts around the country and by the end of the year he had been an MFC speaker at two of the leading patient safety conferences. He's a great colleague to work with, highly esteemed by all and his insight and sharp mind has proved a great asset on several occasions. His mission is to support staff to save lives like his daughter's and he wants to help as much as possible in this work."

Jodie Butcher, Head of Participation, Involvement and Experience at NSFT, and Manager for the Think Family and Carer Project, says:

"Trevor Stevens has been one of the most impactful and courageous contributors I've ever had the privilege to work with. His ability to speak with honesty, and compassion—despite unimaginable personal loss—has changed the way we think, listen, and act. Trevor doesn't just share his own and his beloved daughter's story; he uses it to drive real change, challenging us to be better for the families we serve. His influence has been profound, both within NSFT and nationally, and we are deeply grateful for his partnership, wisdom, and commitment to making a difference."

Jill Curtis, Senior Family and Carers Lead at NSFT, says:

"How sad but wonderful it has been to work with Trevor. His amazingly calm and compassionate nature when sharing his experiences has brought a really valuable aspect to the work we are doing to support carers and families."

Summary;

We are honored to recognize **Trevor Stevens** with the Inspirational Story Award for his extraordinary courage and dedication to transforming mental health care following the tragic death of his daughter, **Tobi, in 2020**. While Tobi was in care, her family was not informed of her deteriorating mental health struggles, a silence that Trevor has committed to breaking forever.

Trevor has channeled his immense personal pain into a powerful, national mission, working with groups like **Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT)** and **Making Families Count**. He has tirelessly shared Tobi's story to highlight the critical, life-saving importance of including families and carers in the treatment of young people. Trevor doesn't just ask professionals to involve families; he challenges them to **"justify why they wouldn't be,"** shifting the default to inclusion and reminding staff that carers are central, not peripheral, to a patient's recovery. His authentic, compassionate, and unwavering advocacy has led to tangible, life-saving changes in policy and practice, inspiring us all to value lived experience and strive for better care for every family.