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DRUGS • ALCOHOL • GAMBLING

# 2021 Bereaved by Drugs, Alcohol or Gambling Conference

## LOCKDOWN, VOLUME AND LOSS – HELPING OTHERS WHO ARE BEREAVED

via Zoom Conferencing

### Morning Speakers:

Dr Sangeeta Mahajan, Fiona Spargo-Mabbs,  
James Sabin (DrugFAM Junior Ambassador)

### Afternoon Speakers:

Gill Owen Conway, Liz and Charles Ritchie and Peter Cartwright.  
With performances by Celtic Singer Ado Matheson and Welsh singer Betty Harper  
supported by Natasha Harper.

## Saturday 9th October 2021

A huge thank you to everyone who supported our Annual National Bereavement Conference in 2020. We hope that you will join us for this year's virtual event.

Register and pay for your place here @£20 per head  
[drugfamconference2021.eventbrite.co.uk](https://drugfamconference2021.eventbrite.co.uk)

This conference is funded by an educational grant  
from Camurus Ltd.



Lives Worth  
Talking About

# Our 2021 Speakers...



**Peter Cartwright**  
Specialist Bereavement Counsellor,  
Conference Host

Peter has over twenty years of experience of both counselling bereaved people and supporting families affected by a loved one's drug or alcohol use. He has brought these two strands together to develop a specialism in substance-related bereavements through his work as a counsellor, trainer, researcher and author. He is the lead author of 'Supporting people bereaved through a drug- or alcohol-related death', the first book to specifically address how to support and counsel these marginalised people, published in September 2020.

He works with DrugFAM to provide training and clinical supervision to their staff and volunteers, and facilitates their quarterly bereavement support group.



**Fiona Spargo-Mabbs,**  
Director and Founder, Daniel Spargo-Mabbs  
Foundation

Fiona Spargo-Mabbs founded a drugs education charity in 2014 in response to the death of her 16-year-old son Daniel from ecstasy. The charity aims to support young people to make safe choices and reduce harm, and works with young people, parents, teachers and professionals across the UK. Her book for parents, 'I wish I'd known', was published in May 2021.

Fiona brings to this role extensive experience from many years of working in education at operational and strategic levels locally and nationally. Her passionate commitment to do all she can to prevent what happened to her son happening to anyone else drives everything she does.

For more information see [www.dsmfoundation.org.uk](http://www.dsmfoundation.org.uk)



**Dr Sangeeta Mahajan**

Dr Sangeeta Mahajan is mother to Saagar, a lovely young man who loved playing the drums, speaking French, playing cricket, cackling like a child and making people laugh. He was a gentle soul with a heart of gold. Sadly, after a brief but severe illness, he died by suicide six years ago. He was 20.

Sangeeta is a Mental Health activist, advocate and educator. She is a Trustee of the national charity for prevention of young suicide, PAPYRUS. She dreams of a world where everyone lives with hope. Aside from individually supporting parents and young people, she has been a keynote speaker at various national and international conferences. She also works as a Consultant Anaesthetist at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust in London.

Sangeeta has spoken at various retreats and conferences in the UK and abroad. Her words are honest, moving, inspiring, hopeful and helpful for anyone who has suffered deep loss.



**Ado Matheson**  
Songs from the Heart

Ado Matheson is a Celtic singer and songwriter inspired by his family tradition of music especially his late grandfather who was crowned 'Celtic Bard' in the 50's for his writing. Ado has lost many members of his family and friends through addiction. However the greatest tragedy was losing his dear younger son William to heroin in 2013. His music and writing are helping him to heal and come to terms with his grief. He hopes above all else that his music will reach out and touch the hearts of those who have been there regardless of time and circumstances.



**Liz and Charles Ritchie**  
Co-Founders of Charity Gambling with Lives

Charles and Liz lost their son Jack to suicide due to gambling disorder in November 2017. They set about finding out what had happened to him and to understand how something marketed as a "bit of fun" and promoted by the government had caused his death. They found many other families similarly bereaved and highly addictive products hidden by normalisation.

They will be speaking about the number of suicides linked to gambling and the work that they and other families have done through Gambling with Lives to support each other and raise awareness of the dangers of gambling, and in particular the high suicide risk.



**James Sabin**  
DrugFAM's Junior Ambassador

When I was just nine years old my world was turned upside down when my eldest brother Daniel died of a drugs overdose. Since then I have tried hard to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs especially in schools to young people so that the same does not happen in their families. I have become a Junior Ambassador for DrugFAM. At the conference this year I will be speaking about my achievements in this role and sharing what it is like to be in this role. I am proud to be a part of DrugFAM and to share my journey especially my most recent adventure with my other brother Phil when we did a Sky Dive for DrugFAM in April 2021.



**Gill Owen-Conway**

After stepping down from the Director of Chiltern Branch of Samaritans Elizabeth contacted me and I began as a volunteer for DrugFAM. Shortly afterwards, I was asked to facilitate the High Wycombe weekly support group for families affected by active substance and alcohol use.

In 2018 I was asked to take up the post of Helpline Manager. I have also had the privilege of working closely with many bereaved clients. I enjoy public speaking for DrugFAM.



**Betty Harper**  
Welsh Singer

Betty Harper is a young music artist who writes songs from the heart using experiences to make meaningful and relatable songs. She has a guitar that's really special to her. It's a Joan Cashimira Spanish guitar. She watched it get produced in Spain for her birthday. Her grandad and nana bought it for her. That's the only guitar she likes using for gigs and she takes it everywhere with her.



**Elizabeth Burton-Phillips MBE QAVS**  
Founder



**Paul Rompani**  
Chief Executive Officer

# DrugFAM's 13th Annual National Bereavement Conference 2021

## PROGRAMME

### MORNING SESSION 9.40am to 12.30pm with a break at 11.00am

- 09.40** Log on to Zoom available from this time. **Peter Cartwright** will give people a 'count down' to the start (and will link and introduce all subsequent parts of the day).
- 10.00** **Start: Paul Rompani CEO** of DrugFAM will welcome everyone and introduce Peter Cartwright as the Conference Host.
- Peter Cartwright** will cover housekeeping, self-care during the day and note the DrugFAM support which will be available throughout the day.
- 10.15** **Ado Matheson Celtic Singer** will open the event with a song for the bereaved.
- 10.20** **Speaker 1: Dr Sangeeta Mahajan** will speak about self-care and compassion.
- 11.00** Break
- 11.20** **Elizabeth Burton-Phillips** will speak about her experience and set up sharing time.
- 11.25** **Break Out Groups** 'Their lives are worth talking about' sharing time.
- 12.05** **Speaker 2: Fiona Spargo-Mabbs**, will speak about her experience of losing her son after he took ecstasy.
- 12.30** **Lunch** (Ado will sing towards the end of lunch time).

### AFTERNOON SESSION 1.30pm-4pm with a break at 2.20pm

- 1.30** **Speaker 3: James Sabin**, will speak about his Sky Dive for DrugFAM on 18th April 2021 with his brother Phil. This which will include live film of their jump.
- 1.55** **Speaker 4: Gill Owen-Conway** will speak about DrugFAM's support for the bereaved.
- 2.20** Break
- 2.40** **Speaker 5: Liz Ritchie and Charles Ritchie**, will share their experiences of losing their son Jack to suicide because of a gambling disorder.
- 3.15** **Betty Harper** will sing 'Blood is Thicker than Alcohol'.
- 3.25** **Speaker 6: Peter Cartwright** will ask 'What exactly is grieving and how do we do it effectively?'
- 3.45** Reflection Time holding pictures of our loved ones, candles and Ado singing.
- 3.55** Peter will end the conference: thank attendees and remind them of the DrugFAM Helpline.
- 04.00** **DrugFAM's CEO will speak briefly to all attendees.**
- 04.15** Log off Zoom.