

## *I'm a paramedic. But nobody taught me how...*

I'm a paramedic but nobody taught me how to sit an 86 year old gentleman down to tell him his wife of 65 years has died in her sleep. Nobody taught me how to watch as the desire for life leaves his eyes the moment I break the earth shattering news that would change his life forever.

Nobody taught me how to accept a torrent of abuse from a complete stranger, just because they have been drinking all day and want a lift home.

Nobody taught me how to reason with the aggressive patient I've just met, overdosed but needing my help to breathe.

Nobody taught me how to talk to someone so depressed that they have just slit their own wrists, panicked and called for help. Nobody taught me how to respond when they turned to me and said, "I can't even get suicide right".

Nobody taught me how to bite my tongue when I went two hours over my finish time for someone who'd been 'generally unwell' for 24 hours.

Nobody taught me how to accept that I would miss out on things other people take for granted; birthdays, Christmas day, meals at normal times of the day, sleep.

Nobody taught me how to hold hands with a dying person as they take their last breath, how to hold back the tears because it's not my grief.

Nobody taught me how to keep a straight face whilst a young man explains exactly what happened to the end of his Hoover.

Nobody taught me how to act when a patient pulls a knife on me.

Being a paramedic is so much more than swooping in and saving lives; it's about dealing with the most unique, challenging experiences and just going home at the end of the shift, being asked 'how was your day' and replying 'fine thanks'.

Being a paramedic is about constantly giving a bit of yourself to every patient, because although it's our fifth patient of the day and we can't remember their name, it's their first ambulance, their loved one, their experience.

It's about the bits that nobody taught me how...

It's about providing pain relief and reassurance to a 90 year old lady who's fallen and hurt her hip, and despite all the pain she turns and says, "Thank you, how are you?".

It's about a hug that you give someone on Christmas Day because they haven't spoken to anyone for days, they have no relatives or companions but you've brightened up their day.

It's about climbing in the car next to someone and saying, 'Don't worry, we'll have you out of here in just a moment'

It's about everything that we do that the media doesn't publicise.

It's about knowing the fact that we couldn't attend to the dying man because we were dealing with a drunk... who then assaulted one of us.

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**With credit to Julia Cornah**