

# Exploring the Triangle of Care in Relation to Suicidal Individuals: A Qualitative Study

## Background & aims

Relatives and friends play a key role in engaging professional help for a person who is suicidal and in continuing to provide care once the individual is in contact with mental health services. However, little is known about the extent to which lay and professional care-givers communicate about suicide risk or how they work together to manage it.

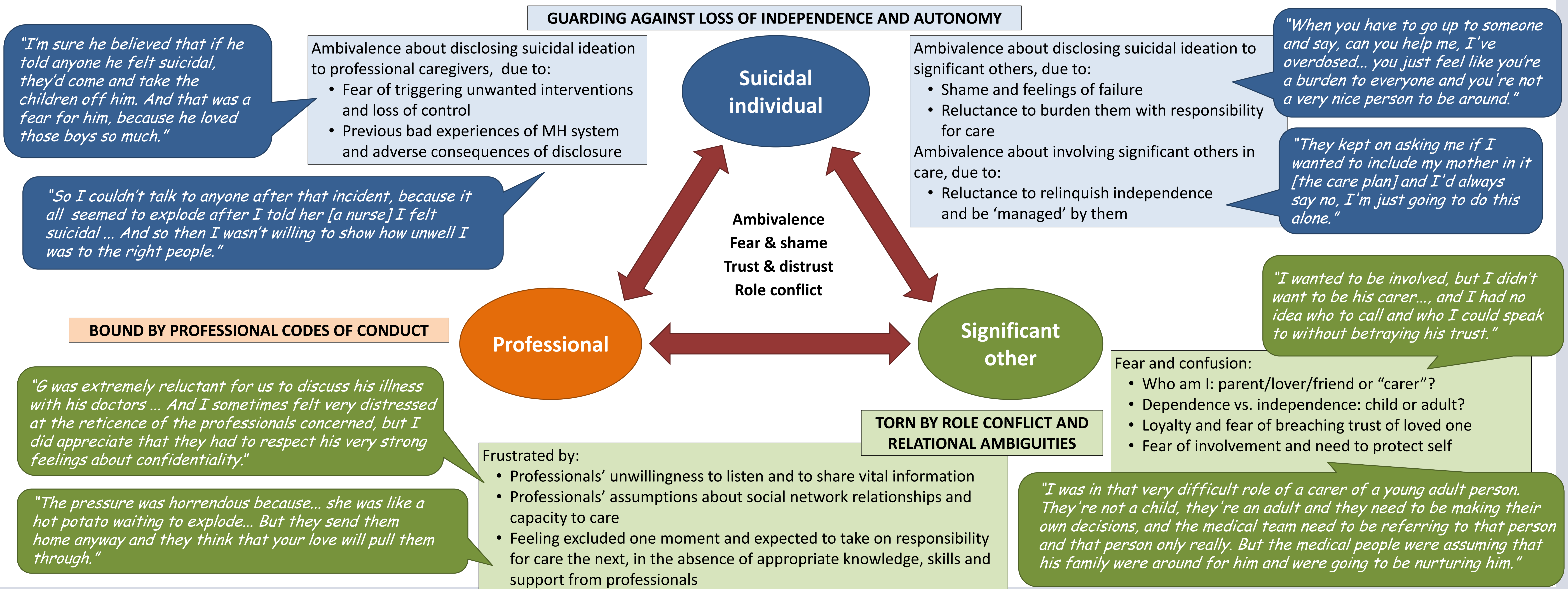
The aim of the study was to examine the social dynamics of caring for a suicidal individual, when the care is being shared by lay and professional care-givers.

## Methods

We used data from in-depth interviews with people who have attempted suicide, their significant others and people who have been bereaved by suicide, in which we explored their experiences of the suicidal process.

We analysed interview transcripts from 45 participants thematically, using the 'Triangle of Care' model<sup>1</sup> to conceptualise the relationships between the suicidal individual, significant others and mental health professionals. No professionals were interviewed in this study.

## Findings



## Conclusions

Greater attention needs to be given to factors that promote or block effective communication between the suicidal individual, their significant others and health care professionals. Better models of engagement which foster openness and trust between all parties in the triangle of care are needed in order to support recovery and promote safety during a suicidal crisis.

## References

<sup>1</sup> National Mental Health Development Unit. *The Triangle of Care, Carers Included: A Guide to Best Practice in Mental Health Care in England (2nd Edition)*. London: Carers Trust, 2013.