

Deaths in prison you will never get used to, the feeling when you walk on a wing and instantly you are hit with pure emotions ranging from anger to sadness. That feeling of change and the look in the men's eyes, it is hard not to feel anything, and it is even harder to not take those feelings home. That thought was always there – is it right for a man to die in prison?

Most times, following a death in the prison, my walks with Rebecca to the gate home were in silence, but not consciously. I think we were both trying to process what we had just seen and felt on the wings.

For most of the men, counselling has an impact on their lives in some way, shape or form, but after a death, seeing the pain in a man's eyes, you know there is nothing you can say or do to help him. It is a process that they need to go through. Helpless is a feeling that comes to mind. Knowing that some of those men will never process what they have witnessed or lost is always looming. A goodbye is an ending, but the men never get to say goodbye. Tragic is the feeling. Some of these men grew up with each other and the pain they must have felt would be intense. As counsellors, we could feel their pain.

I once counselled Gary whose friend had died in prison. Gary had discovered him in his bed. The friend had died in the night from unknown causes. The pain and trauma I saw in his eyes was so intense. I saw him well up and then instantly knock it away and block the feelings.