



Topic Talks

Dying to know: final conversations about death

This week includes Dying to Know Day - an annual campaign where conversations about death are encouraged. As Health Professionals, conversations about death are common but uncommonly done well. This week we will explore end of life conversations.

A photograph of a whiteboard with handwritten text in blue and red markers. The text reads: "Talking about death is ..." followed by "morbid", "taboo", and "weird" each on a new line and underlined with a red line. Below these, "part of life!" is written in blue. The entire whiteboard image is framed by a thick green border.

The 'final conversation about death' is:

- Unique to the individual and their experiences
- Remains somewhat 'taboo' among health professionals
- Often inconsistently done with lack of training opportunities for health professionals
- Complicated by competing priorities, lack of experience and confidence in broaching the subject of death and dying with patients
- Often left too late

Let's talk

Suggested questions to ask yourself or your peers this week



How would you rate your level of understanding of this topic?

Watch a webinar, listen to a podcast, look at the websites. Learn something new.

In 2009 Gamino & Ritter coined the term 'Death Competence' - 'a specialized skill in tolerating and managing clients' problems related to dying, death, and bereavement'

What skills and experience do you think a health professional needs to be 'Death Competent'.

Rawlings (2017) suggests that over the years the way people talk about death has changed, it appears to have become taboo and society is described as being "death-denying"

What are your thoughts in relation to these points?

What are 2 new pieces of information you have learned about the topic this week?

Think about what you have learned. How can you use this learning going forward?

Loddon Mallee Activities and Resources



What's on the Web?



References:



Tuesdays@2 Special Seminar Event

Tuesday 10th August **2pm-3pm** : Join the webinar via the [Bendigo Health Website](#)

or via zoom <https://bendigohealth.zoom.us/j/93324155450?pwd=Nm9iSUZmSEl4enJHWFRheWRtaTdaUT09>

Speaker:

- Amy Clancey - Advance Care Planning Coordinator

Topic: Crisis Talks: "You are Dying"

Panel:

- Amy Clancey - Advance Care Planning Coordinator
- Dr. Simon Smith- ED Clinical Unit Head
- Kylie Maddern – ED Nurse- Clinical Nurse Educator for nurses
- Alison Smith - Manager - Integrated Palliative Care Service

E-Learning:

- [Cancer Council Victoria - End of life conversations e-learning modules](#)
- [CareSearch - Dying2Learn](#)
- [End of Life Essentials Education Modules](#)

Webcasts:

- Frontline PBS (2020) Being Mortal: How do you talk about death with a dying loved one? Dr. Atul Gawande explores death, dying and why even doctors struggle to discuss being mortal with patients, in this Emmy-nominated documentary. [54:01] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQhI3Jb7vMg>
- Talks at Google (2017) Being Mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end - Atul Gawande. [1:03:25] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mviU9OeufA0>

Podcasts:

- [The conversation project - 8 podcasts about end of life care](#)
- [Austin Health: Clinical Podcasts](#)

Web Sites:

- [The Groundswell Project: Dying to Know Day](#)
- [Australian Govt Dept of Health: Start the Conversation](#)
- [Advance Care Planning Australia](#)

- Bergenholtz, H., Missel, M., Timm, H. (2020) Talking about death and dying in a hospital setting - a qualitative study of the wishes for end-of-life conversations from the perspective of patients and spouses. BMC Palliative Care. 19:168.
- Hussain, F. (2020) Managing conversations with patients about death and dying. British Journal of Nursing. 29(5): 284-289
- Generous, M., Keeley, M. (2017) Wished for and avoided conversations with terminally ill individuals during final conversations. Death Studies. 41(3): 162-172.
- Kauer, T., Keeley, M. (2019) Conversations about death with those who experience it most. Qualitative Research Reports in Communication. 20(1): 84-91
- Rawlings, D., Tieman, J., Sanderson, C., Parker, D., Miller-Lewis, L. (2017) Never say die: death euphemisms, misunderstandings and their implications for practice. International Journal of Palliative Nursing. 23(7) Retrieved from <https://www.magonlinelibrary.com/doi/full/10.12968/ijpn.2017.23.7.324>