

Before

you're pushing
up the daisies



Start an end of life discussion

dyingmattersstaffs.org



STAFFORDSHIRE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Dying
Matters

Staffordshire

*'Let's talk
about it'*

When 'pushing up daisies' isn't helpful

It seems few of us are comfortable talking about dying and death. Look at the sheer number of phrases we use to avoid discussing it openly. We 'kick the bucket', 'pop our clogs', 'peg it', 'pass away'; we seldom simply 'die'. Research suggests we avoid it because we are "too young" or death "feels a long way off".

It's time to talk.

Making time to have honest conversations about your end of life wishes is important. And the best time to do it is while you are well.

Have these discussions now and you are more likely to get the care you want, have the best possible quality of life and might be able to spend your final time where and how you'd like.

On the other hand, if you don't make your wishes known then the chances are they won't be fulfilled. For those closest to you this can make a deeply troubling time even more stressful.

They could be left worrying, or even arguing, about decisions they have to make on your behalf. They might not even know basic information such as whether you would prefer burial or cremation.

Sadly, a quarter of deaths are unexpected. Any one of us could go from being very well to the final stages of life in a very short time. So have that chat now. It always seems too early, until it's too late.

**Staffordshire Health
and Wellbeing Board**

November 2017

**Dying
Matters**

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Better together

People often feel more comfortable to speak openly about dying when they are part of a group. This approach has proved beneficial across the country.

Whether you are already part of a group that wants to explore end of life discussions, or if you want to start a brand new chat group, we have some practical advice.

There is no single 'right way' to proceed; your approach should always be tailored to the needs of your community. What works elsewhere might not work for you.

Is there anybody out there?

Have a look on the web for any end of life discussion groups already in your area. Go along to one of their meetings and watch them in action. Ask the organisers if they'd be willing to meet with your group or offer a few pointers for your own discussions. If you want to start your own group, the same advice applies.

Bear in mind that having similar groups in close proximity might confuse potential members and duplicate effort. However, if your group has a particular focus, perhaps it's for a specific cultural group, then this shouldn't be an issue.

What's in a name?

If you're planning a session or starting a new group a short, memorable name will serve you well. Many groups have surprising names such as 'Death Cafes', 'Grave Talks' or 'Dying in the Ditch'.

Such novel approaches are useful to draw attention, and particularly to get the press interested. Be aware that some people might not like your name. That's fine, everyone has their opinion, but it's wise to check your name won't cause offense.

New group? Find a home

If you are starting a group from scratch you'll need to make an educated guess as to how many might attend. Pubs, cafes, conference centres, community halls, churches etc. all have potential as venues.

Ask yourself how easy is the location is to get to? Can you get to it on public transport? Does it have good disabled access? And, when you get there, will it be obvious where to go?

What facilities does it have? Toilets? Somewhere to make a hot drink? Power sockets you can use? Blinds and a screen if you want to show slides?

Getting known

Your sessions won't thrive if no one knows about them:

- With this leaflet we provide paper master templates for simple posters and fliers. Photocopy them and in the blank space write or print details of your group's event. Place them wherever people gather e.g. community halls, libraries, supermarkets, GPs surgeries etc. but always ask first. You can get digital versions online at: www.dyingmattersstaffs.org
- Don't underestimate the power of your friends and family. They already know loads of people. Get them to spread the word.
- A brand new group or session to talk about dying should be interesting to your local newspapers; let them know.
- If you haven't already, create a Facebook page and Twitter account. They cover different audiences, and you can find lots of help online to get the best out of them. Social media can be very effective, especially if you ask your family, friends and contacts to share your posts.
- Paid advertising. If you have any funds consider advertising in local newspapers and on Facebook. Facebook allows you to target your post at local people. Search and learn how online. Your local County Councillor might be able to help out with a grant from their Local Community Fund.
- Contact appropriate local businesses such as will writers. They might agree to help you out by offering your fliers to their clients.

However you choose to advertise always include:

- Name of your session or group.
- What the meeting will cover.
- Any fees e.g. nominal contribution to room booking.
- The name and location of the venue. Be sure to include the postcode.
- The date and time of the meeting.
- Contact details for the organisers, email and telephone.



The first meeting

This is where you establish what it is people want from the group.

- How often should you meet?
- What would they like to see?
- Will you always have an agenda or is it just drop in and chat?
- Will you be getting any guest speakers?

We have a starter pack of digital slides available on:

www.dyingmattersstaffs.org.

Download and use them as you see fit, maybe as discussion points or to illustrate talks.

Keeping it fresh

Groups can fail if people lose interest and wander off. Fortunately there's a wealth of material on the Dying Matters website:

www.dyingmatters.org to help keep things fresh.

From thought provoking films, to personal blogs, links, events and advice. It's well worth a visit for inspiration.



Useful links

Dying Matters charity:

www.dyingmatters.org

Campaign web pages and resources:

www.dyingmattersstaffs.org

Staffordshire Local Community Fund:

www.staffordshire.gov.uk/yourcouncil/slcf/home.aspx

Contact

If you have any question about
Dying Matters Staffordshire
please contact:

publichealth@staffordshire.gov.uk

Acknowledgments

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www.dyingmatters.org. Thank you.