


Coping with death and recognizing it as a natural and important part of life

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Overview



- Brief snapshot of my personal and professional journey with death and dying
- Impact of Palliative Diagnosis- emotional, practical, legal
- Approaches – Practical assistance, Advance Care Planning , Emotional support
- What is an 'End of Life' Doula and why do we need them?
- Funeral and their important role in healthy grieving
- Challenges for Interpreters working in Palliative Care
- Q and A

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Palliative Diagnosis




'Life is what happens when we are busy making other plans' John Lennon

- Physical/practical – as different and unique as individual – challenges will be different depending on your resources, age, health prior to diagnosis, family
- Legal – important documents including Will – can be challenging for many people
- Emotional – shock, disbelief, anger, questioning 'why me', anxiety


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Post Palliative Diagnosis



- Benefits of sensitive and skilled psycho social assessment
- Value of family meeting- input from interpreter vital.
- Importance of moving at the pace that the person and family can manage.
- Team approach – importance of supporting all members of the team- including Interpreter


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"You matter because you are you, and you matter to the last moment of your life. We will do all that we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die."
Dame Cicely Saunders

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Approaches to helping individuals and their families



Practical issues

- Financial concerns eg Centrelink
- Accessing superannuation terminal illness information
- Advocacy with different agencies eg childcare, school, time off from employment for relatives on compassionate grounds
- Support to access home care packages

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Approaches to helping individuals and their families

Advance Care Planning

- Enduring Power of Attorney
- Statement of Choices
- Advance Health Directive
- Will

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Approaches to helping individuals and their families

Dignity Therapy and Life Legacy work –Craig's Story

"I was trying to put myself in a bottle that would one day wash up on the beach for my children...none of this is a replacement for a living parent...it's about doing the best you can with limited resources"

Randy Pausch -*The Last Lecture*

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Approaches to helping individuals and their families

Dignity Therapy and Life Legacy work

"You cannot really possess anything, not land, not a person not a child...all you can possess at the end of your life is your story" Baz Luhrmann

- Developed by Harvey Chochinov and designed to address psychosocial and existential distress among terminally ill patients.
- Research study using dignity therapy Invited patients to discuss issues that matter most to them or that they would most want remembered.
- 91% of participants reported being satisfied with dignity therapy; 76% reported a heightened sense of dignity; 68% reported an increased sense of purpose; 67% reported a heightened sense of meaning.

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Approaches to helping individuals and their families

End of Life Doula Work

An end of life Doula is a non-medical role that provides support, knowledge, resources, and assistance to those at end of life and to their carers, family and friends. Some of the services that can be provided by a Doula are:

- Sharing information and exploring service options and choices
- Advance care planning
- Funeral pre-planning
- Being present as an 'end of life companion' for when active dying occurs
- Assisting in navigating the medical system and accompanying individuals and carers to medical appointments and
- Co-creating life-stories and other legacy projects.

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Funerals and their role in healthy grieving

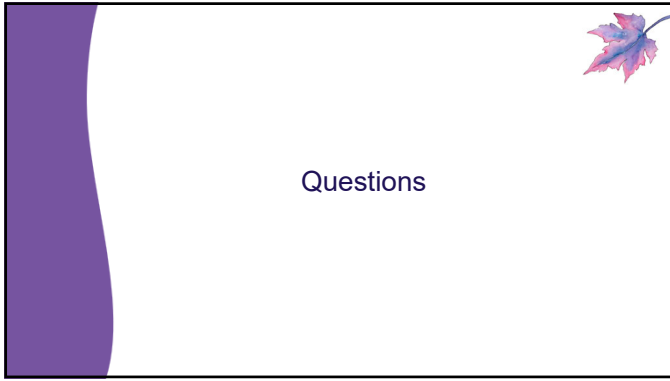
- Funeral is an important first stage in mourning the loss – not just celebrating the life. Can heighten previous losses including those connected with the whole migrant experience.
- Time to reflect on the legacy – life story work can be very helpful
- Opportunity for support from family and friends
- Migrant communities frequently have important rituals that help families in the week and months ahead
- Grieving is not a linear process – in the past there had been the belief that one had to 'graduate' through various stages (Kubler Ross)
- Grieving is a uniquely personal process - normal human reaction to loss and not something to be pathologized.

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Challenges for Interpreters in the Palliative setting

- Complex and frequently highly emotional work. Importance of access to debrief following a difficult or challenging consultation
- Can tap into our own experiences of loss or fear of death
- Cultural sensitivities – is it ok to use the word death or dying –is this acceptable. How to manage communicating with the team caring for the person if there are issues
- Interpreter is part of the community and indeed may well know the person or their family- how to manage that

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