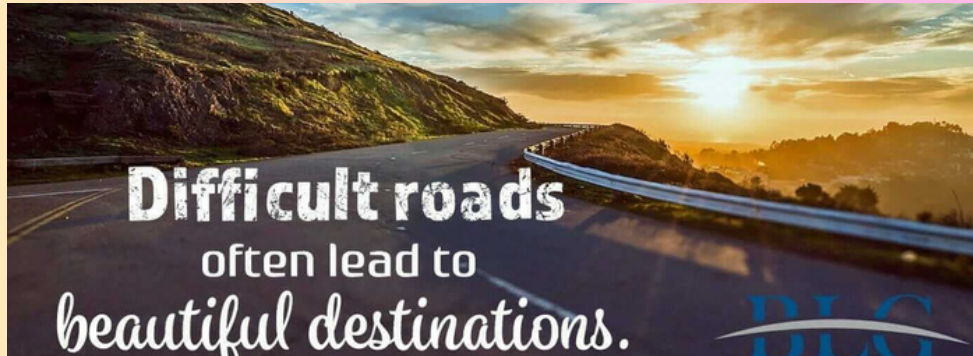


#HospiceLink

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Finding the right words

Having conversations with patients and families about dying for some can raise some anxiety and fear, it may not come naturally and we can feel out of our "comfort zone". As we are exposed to, or become more involved in these conversations, thru gained experience, we can become more confident in managing these. It can take time, and bravery for some especially with some cultural differences in how we approach and talk about death and dying. It can also lead to having some rewarding and special conversations.



We can learn from our colleagues, and by sharing our experiences – picking up little "gems" along the way – you may like the way a colleague explained things and think "yes that would work for me also".

Some nurses find it difficult to find the words to broach the topic about approaching death. It is an important part of our work, and the nature of the environment we work in, that people will die. It is important that we are able to recognise when someone is deteriorating and getting closer to the end of their lives. Families need to be aware so that they can prepare themselves and do what they need to do as a family to meet their loved ones needs, and their own needs.

A family expressed to me recently, that they had no idea or any mention from the nurse, that their mother was dying, until she died. They had not experienced death before and had not seen it. The family indicated if they had been told that she was dying they would have done things differently ie ensuring that others were there also.

It is better if possible not to talk in innuendos but you need to do what is comfortable for you also whilst getting your message across. Don't be afraid to use the word dying.

Kathryn Manning – Dying isn't as bad as you think

Some helpful examples may be:

"His/her system is shutting down and it looks like he/she is dying"

"He/she is getting closer to the end of their life now – we will do everything we can do to keep them comfortable and manage their symptoms here "

"It would seem that time is becoming more precious now/ or limited"

"It seems that Mum/Dads condition has turned a corner for the worst"

"It is hard to give prognosis, as everyone is different – but my gut feeling is that we may be looking at hours/days/weeks/months"

"I wish I had better news to give you but ..."

"It would seem like we are getting to the final moments"

"Unfortunately the cancer/disease is worsening"

These can lead onto a conversation about signs and symptoms of approaching death. It is important to discuss these with the family and/or the patient as it can go a long way to allaying fears and anxieties.

We are happy to provide you with some brochures you can use to support your conversations with families and patients.

Here is a helpful brochure: [When someone is Dying](#)



Upcoming Education

The last dates for this year...

Next Syringe Driver Competency course Wednesday 8 November - 1 pm - 3 pm

Next Syringe Driver Refresher course Wednesday 15 November - 1pm-2.30pm

OTHER REALLY USEFUL RESOURCES FOR STAFF...

Check out these previous lectures by Kathryn Mannix - available from Hospice NZ website.

- **Doing Death Differently** (March 2019)
- **Tender Conversations** (October 2022)

Serious Illness Conversation guide - a short online training module.

Palliative Care lecture series

2 November 2023 - 0730am - 0830am

A model of care for people with severe COPD



Dr Amanda Landers - Senior Clinical Lecturer in the Department of Medicine and leads the Palliative and End of Life Care module.

Watch them wherever you are, you'll be able to access all you need for the lecture via a private webpage.

Watch previous lectures from here - wherever you are.

Monthly Brain teaser:

I met a man and drew his name. He tipped his hat and played my game. What is his name?

Last month: If I am holding a bee, what do I have in my eye?

Answer: Beauty - because beauty is in the eye of the beholder (bee holder).

Congratulations to Princess at Summerset Mountain View! Enjoy your chocolates. We had LOTS of people come back with correct answers this month, but you just need to be in first.