

Dying Matters

Key messages and Facts



Overview

To assist Members of the Dying Matters Coalition members in raising awareness and communicating the aims of the Coalition both within your organisation and to members of the public we have provided a series of key messages and facts below.

Coalition members can use any of the content provided to develop your own press releases, responses or other materials.

If you would like further information about any of the topics included below, or need further information about a related topic, contact the Dying Matters team on freephone 08000 21 44 66 or at info@dyingmatters.org.

Key Messages

- As a society, we need to talk more about dying and death. As individuals, we all need to have a conversation about our end of life choices and wishes with our family, friends and loved ones.
- Talking about death doesn't bring it nearer. It's about planning for life – because it allows you to make the most of the time that you have.
- There are 101 ways people find to talk about dying; there is no right or wrong way.
- Not talking about one's wishes towards the end of their lives with friends, family and loved ones can mean that people may not get what they want, or die where they want. They might not have expressed their wishes about their care or funeral, or have made a will. They may simply not have said what they wanted to say.
- Talking about dying makes it more likely that you, or your loved one, will die as they might have wished.

About Dying Matters

- Dying Matters is a broad based Coalition that has been set up by the National Council for Palliative Care (NCPC) to raise public awareness of dying, death and bereavement, to support the implementation of the Government's End of Life Care Strategy.
- The Dying Matters Coalition mission is to promote awareness and support changing knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards dying, death and bereavement, and through this to make a 'good death' the norm.
- Everybody - whatever their age or state of health – need to talk about their wishes towards the end of life with their friends, families and loved ones. The earlier we talk about it the easier it is emotionally and practically for everyone.
- The Dying Matters Awareness Week will take place from **15 - 21 March 2010**.
- The Dying Matters Coalition has just under 7,000 members with an interest in supporting changing knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards dying, death and bereavement. This includes organisations from across the NHS and the voluntary and independent health and care sectors, including hospices, care homes, charities supporting old people, children and bereavement, from social care and housing

Dying Matters Coalition

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Tel 08000 21 44 66 Fax 020 7697 1530 Email info@dyingmatters.org www.dyingmatters.org

The Dying Matters Coalition is raising public awareness of dying, death and bereavement in England. It is led by the National Council for Palliative Care, the umbrella charity promoting palliative care for all those who need it. **The National Council for Palliative Care** Registered Charity no. 1005671.

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sectors, from a wide range of faith organisations, community organisations, schools and colleges, academic bodies, trade unions, the legal profession and from the funeral sector.

Did you know?

- Most people (around 70%) would prefer to die at home, but most (around 60%) die in hospital – in many cases unnecessarily.
- While more than 70% of people report feeling confident about planning for their end of life, less than a third (29%) of people have actually discussed their wishes around dying.

Source: NatCen survey on attitudes towards dying, death and bereavement commissioned on behalf of Dying Matters, July - September 2009.

Subjects to talk about with friends, family and loved ones

In the checklist below are some of the areas that people can leave it too late to discuss. Some of these may be more important to you than others. If you want to know more about any of these areas, then go to the Dying Matters website www.dyingmatters.org.

- The type of care someone would like towards the end of their life
- Where they'd like to die
- Whether they want to be resuscitated or not
- Funeral arrangements
- Care of dependents
- Save other lives – through organ donation
- How they'd like to be remembered
- Whether they have any particular worries they'd like to discuss about being ill and dying
- What they'd like people to know before they die

Mnemonic - Take Time To T.A.L.K.

Dying Matters has developed the strapline 'Take Time To Talk' to help people remember what the Coalition is asking individuals to do – namely, have a discussion about dying, death, and bereavement with family and loved ones.

Think... how do I prepare for my death?

Act... take steps now to ensure you are prepared

Live... quality of life is important, especially at end of life

Know... that you will die according to your wishes, with dignity

The End of Life Care Strategy

- The Westminster Government published the End of Life Care Strategy in July 2008. It promotes high quality care for all adults at the end of life in England by providing people with more choice about where they would like to live and die. Similar strategies for the end of life have also been developed in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- About 500,000 people die in England every year. The majority of deaths occur in adults over 65 years old, and following a period of chronic illness related to conditions such as heart disease, stroke, liver disease, renal disease, diabetes, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, neurological diseases and dementia.

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- The Department of Health End of Life Care Strategy says there are many challenges to be overcome to ensure that everyone attains 'a good death' irrespective of their background.
- Everybody deserves 'a good death' and this is more likely to be achieved by talking about it early on. Although every individual may have a different idea about what would, for them, constitute 'a good death', for many this would involve:
 - Being treated as an individual, with dignity and respect
 - Being without pain and other symptoms
 - Being in familiar surroundings
 - Being in the company of close family and/or friends



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'Let's talk
about it'

Further Reading

Dying Matters Coalition – website:

<http://www.dyingmatters.org.uk>

The Department of Health End of Life Care Strategy (July 2008):

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_086345.pdf

The National Council for Palliative Care End of Life Care Manifesto 2010 (2009)

<http://www.ncpc.org.uk/download/publications/2010Manifesto.pdf>

Scotland – *Living and dying well: A national action plan for palliative and end of life care in Scotland (2008)*

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/10/01091608/0>

Wales – *The Sugar Report on palliative care provision in Wales (June 2008):*

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/publications/health/reports/palliativecare/?lang=en>

Northern Ireland – *Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy (2009 - Draft currently undergoing consultation)*

<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/showconsultations?txtid=40197>

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