



We want to support New Zealanders to have more conversations about death, in the hope they might worry about it less.

Death seems to have become a difficult topic for a lot of people. Many of us have lost the knowledge about what happens, what to say to each other, and the options we have for care. That lack of information often results in fear. But dying is often much more peaceful and gentle than people expect.

'We need to talk about dying' aims to support communities to reclaim their familiarity with dying by sharing stories and information and to make it easy for them to talk about it more, and to ensure we all feel more ready and able to support each other when we're grieving.

Death is a social experience, and we all have a role.

You can find out more at www.hospice.org.nz/weneedtotalkaboutdying

Questions and Answers

Why do you think we need to talk about this more?

We're hearing a lot of worry and misinformation about death and dying in the national dialogue at the moment. For many people, death has become unfamiliar and frightening, so that when someone we know is dying or grieving, their experiences are unfamiliar to us and we don't know what to say.

We know death to be a natural part of life, and it's usually a lot more gentle and peaceful than people expect. Perhaps if we talked about it a bit more, if we got more familiar with what happens and what care is available, we'd worry less and we'll feel more prepared for when someone we love is dying or grieving.

What sort of conversations do you think we need to have?

Anything is helpful – talking about it won't make it happen any sooner.

We suggest people talk about what a 'good death' means to them, what sort of care they'd like and who would be with them; discuss what's worrying you; discuss other people's deaths you've witnessed and what you could learn from them; discuss how to care for and talk to each other in times of grief; just get better at talking about it so you won't have to learn how to do so when it gets really hard. We've provided a list of conversation starters, and there are also plenty of resources online.

Is this about assisted dying?

This is about promoting more positive conversations about the end of life, but it is in part a response to the current conversation about assisted dying especially because the debate about the End of Life Choice Bill has prompted a lot of this worry. The palliative care sector doesn't support the End of Life Choice Bill (although there is a diversity of views like any sector) - but this is not a focus of the project. Instead, we want to take the opportunity of the national debate for a more positive purpose: to encourage communities to get more familiar with death.

What does the project entail?

Hospices across the country will be sharing video stories and other conversation starters through social and mainstream media in the hope they'll offer a different way of thinking about death and dying and encourage people to talk about it.