

experience the death of close relatives or friends, yet schools and society struggle to know how to support them because talking about death is 'taboo'.

Purpose The purpose of this exciting project is to enable students and their teachers to talk openly about dying in a way that dispels some of the euphemisms, myths and fear associated with death and bereavement and to promote the recognition of death as a natural part of living.

Preparation The theatre company has agreed to create, write and perform a multimedia drama using video and live performance as an integral part of a half-day interactive workshop for schools on death and bereavement. It is aimed at Key Stage 4 students, and in addition to relevant lesson plans, schools will be supplied with information packs for teachers, students and parents. Schools will be required to have some counselling support available for students.

The hospice undertook the original groundwork for the project and continues to be closely involved as advisor on the content of the drama, and with the schools liaison work.

Current progress A light-hearted sketch has been created which uses humour to address this serious issue; it will be performed by about eight young student actors. The first six schools who expressed an interest in the project have been selected to take part in the initial phase. Funds for the project will be raised by schools.

Ongoing plans The project includes plans to record the theatre piece on DVD for use in other schools and general release to a national body such as Help the Hospices.

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TABOO OR NOT TABOO: A COLLABORATIVE HOSPICE/ THEATRE/SCHOOLS PROJECT

Bridget Withell, Nicola Irvine *EllenorLions Hospices, Dartford, UK*

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Introduction During their school years, an estimated 22 000 children and young people will lose a parent. Many others will