

P-7 STARTING THE CONVERSATION – INTEGRATING A DEATH CAFÉ INTO THE UNDERGRADUATE NURSE CURRICULUM

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Background Student nurses often feel unprepared to care for and communicate with dying patients and have particular fears and anxieties before their first placement (Cavaye & Watts, 2014; Poultney, Berridge, Malkin, 2014). Educators need to help nurses recognise and confront their own reactions to death and to prepare nurses for this experience (Hench, Melin-Johansson, Bergh, Strang *et al.*, 2017; Dickinson, Clark & Squire, 2008).

Aims To allow opportunities for student nurses to discuss their beliefs and attitudes to death and dying and to voice their fears, anxieties and positive thoughts about caring for people who are dying.

Methods All first year adult nurses in 2018–19 attended a 2 hour interactive workshop in groups of 30–40 with two facilitators. Students were advised of the content in advance to allow discussion of personal issues which might require the student to opt out. Students were asked to discuss words which came to mind when thinking about death and dying, what might be important to them if they were dying and their anxieties and any positive thoughts about caring for dying people. One cohort (30 students) were asked to identify key learning.

Results 100% of students reported the session was useful and specifically identified the interactive approach as helpful in facilitating learning and managing the emotional subject matter. Students identified key learning points as: feeling more confident in what to expect when caring for the dying; importance of communication and talking about death; empathy; realisation that other students have similar worries; and identifying where to get support. Five (17%) students reported that the session would have been better shorter as it was emotional.

Conclusion Evaluation of a pilot workshop for undergraduate student nurses has demonstrated positive learning. A substantial minority find this learning has a high emotional impact. This pilot is the first step in examining students' perceptions and anxieties about caring for dying people and integrating educational support within the undergraduate curriculum.

P-8 DEAD CHATTY!

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Background Research suggests that young people are much less comfortable than their older counterparts with the topic of dying and death in a variety of different ways (Dying Matters Coalition, 2016). Engagement with the local college identified a gap in talking to young people about death, particularly in the context of students responsible for having 'good death conversations' within their chosen profession.

Aims To create/facilitate the development of a safe space for students of health and social care and those going into public services, to explore the subject of death and how to have difficult conversations. The dialogue may be different for each group, but how you feel when talking to families may be similar.

Methods Pilot project launched April – June 2019, 1 × 2 hours per month, non-compulsory, with coffee and cake (mandatory). Course tutors attended and college counsellors notified in case further support required. Sessions were student led but focussed on key topics, and they chose the project name 'Dead Chatty', as it reflected the open nature of the discussions.

Results of evaluation 28 students; attended up to three sessions – 12 evaluated.

Distance travelled calculation based on questionnaire, shown as percentage improvement.

(No change=3); 0%–9%=2; 10%–19%=2; 20%–29%=4; 30%–39%=1

Conclusions It was difficult to get students together (short project, exam times, work placements etc.) better scheduling might help, as would running over the whole academic year. There were tangible changes within the group on the subject matter, confidence grew and humour developed.

What did you like best?

- People sharing experiences
- Open discussions
- No judgement of opinions.

What could be improved?

- Nothing
- More sessions.

A space where students can ask questions, be supported and tackle the taboo of death and dying has been created.

P-9 CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS: TRAINING VOLUNTEERS TO SUPPORT THE ELDERLY AROUND END OF LIFE ISSUES

Rebecca Turner. *St Christopher's Hospice, London*

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Background St Christopher's is increasingly working with local voluntary organisations which support those who are elderly and frail to improve confidence with regards to end of life. Our patient support volunteers are regularly part of conversations around end of life and are honing sophisticated communication skills about subjects many find challenging.

Aims

- To develop the skills of St Christopher's volunteers to provide training for others as a less 'formal' face of hospice care;
- To increase the confidence and skills of local volunteers who support elderly, frail, and vulnerable people in speaking about death;
- To ensure sustainability by increasing the capability of other organisations to develop the skills and expertise of their own volunteers;
- To support better health outcomes at end of life.