

Victorian Councils: Supporting Communities Around End of Life Project

Ideas for Seniors Festival

The Victorian Councils: Supporting Communities Around End of Life Project is a joint project between the MAV and Latrobe University Palliative Care Unit. The project is concerned with 'normalising' death as a part of everyday life and exploring how councils may be able to contribute to this.

To date many councils have become involved in normalising death through promoting conversations in the community, distributing information on end of life services and support and facilitating discussions at community groups.

In the past many seniors groups have had information/presentations about wills, power of attorney, or organising a funeral. Through the project councils have participated in many creative ways to engage their community in conversations around dying, death and bereavement.

The importance of having conversations about death (something that has become a taboo subject and put in the medical/institutional domain) is reiterated in policy and strategies and endorsed by individuals, community, service providers and professionals.

There are resources available to assist individuals and families to discuss a person's wishes at the end of their lives – in the hope that people will experience a 'good death'. There are also resources available to assist communities and groups to have conversations – to normalise and include dying, death and bereavement as part of living through all of life's stages.

Seniors Festival provides an opportunity for councils to include conversations and/or information about end of life.

The following resources are listed to assist councils plan a group session, discussion or event around end of life.

For more information about *the Victorian Councils: Supporting Communities Around End of Life Project*

MAV website: [Link](#)

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Promoting conversations about dying, death and bereavement

Video/clip	Summary	Source
<i>Dying for a Laugh</i> 6.22 minutes	Diverse comedians talking about funerals, a good death. Good messages, entertaining, light hearted	Link
<i>The Coffin Club</i> New Zealand 3.47 minutes	A group of rebellious, creative kiwi seniors give death the finger, one crazy coffin at a time. Entertaining, good messages	Link
<i>20 takes on death and dying</i> 10 minutes	Views of death and dying from the streets of Paisley, Elgin and Inverness in September 2011 Good opener video. Could take the 4 questions to guide discussion in the group.	Link
<i>How to live well and die well</i> 4.37 minutes	A short video for people who are living with progressive illness. About planning ahead and different scenarios of progressing towards death. Explains physical, spiritual, social, psychological dimensions. Provides notes to accompany the video.	Link
<i>The Graceful Death</i> 14 minutes	Video of Graceful death exhibition and how art can help people in conversations and healing. The exhibition is intended to deal with grieving and issues surrounding death and bereavement. Interview with artist Antonia Rolls and others.	Link

Discussing compassionate communities – communities supporting people during dying, death and grief

Video/clip	Summary	Source
<i>Karen & Keith: Caring Neighbours</i> 3.11 minutes	A couple talking about looking out for their elderly neighbour. Produced by: compassionatecommunities.org.uk	Link
<i>Volunteer Scheme helping people in rural Shropshire</i> 4.44 minutes	Volunteer scheme between community centre and hospice. Explains how it works, training of volunteers etc	Link
<i>Community Circles – how do they work</i> 5.47 minutes	Ways for friends, family and neighbours to support each other. Explanation of how community circles work	Link
<i>Rally Round and Community Circles</i> 2.44 minutes	This animation explains Community Circles and how the Rally Round app can help everyone to come together to support the person by easily organising the tasks that need to be done to help.	Link

End of life information and resources

There are a number of resources available to inform people about the medical, legal and decision-making aspects and support services for people approaching the end of life. Some key resources available to download and/or request are listed below.

Topic	Content	Source
'Role of the medical support person'	Brochure about supported decision making explaining role of the medical support person	Office of the Public Advocate Link
'Advance Care Directive'	Brochure gives an overview of how and when an advanced care directive should be used	Office of the Public Advocate Link
'Your voice – trust your choice'	This free booklet is produced by the Office of the Public Advocate. It is for older people, and includes helpful tips, case studies, and sample wording to assist you to think about and make your enduring power of attorney. This booklet is a companion to 'Take Control'	Office of the Public Advocate Link
'Take Control'	Booklet is produced by OPA provides the information and forms you need to appoint a medical treatment decision maker, complete an advance care directive or make an enduring power of attorney. It explains the difference between a medical support person and a medical treatment decision maker	Victorian Legal Aid Link
'Power of Attorney'	A number of brochures about power of attorney and information/guides for attorneys	Office of the Public Advocate Link
'Your life your choice'	Information for Victoria's Koori community on choosing decision makers	Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Office of the Public Advocate Link
'About Palliative Care'	Videos about Palliative Care Brochures in community languages	Department of Health and Human Services Link
'Safeguarding the end of the rainbow'	Guide for LGBTI people at how to plan for future care and medical needs, finances, estate, funeral and burials	COTA Vic Link
'Death of a partner'	Practical guide to what to do after a partners death including funerals, burials and cremations	COTA Vic Link
'Bereavement Support groups'	About types of bereavement support groups and who can join	Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement Link