

# DEMYSTIFYING DEATH WEEK



## EVENT IDEAS

TEMPLATES AND ACTIVITIES

## WELCOME

To help you plan your event for this year's Demystifying Death Week this booklet brings together films, resources and discussion topics on three themes. We've also provided some sample activities you might use to help create a safe and supportive environment.

## USING THESE RESOURCES

These resources

- have been put together for events aimed at the general public rather than health and social care professionals.
- are designed to support small group discussions with input and facilitation from local experts.
- can be adapted, mixed and matched and used in whatever way suits your circumstance

## FURTHER RESOURCES

Check out our website for further informative guides including:

- Designing your event
- Facilitation skills
- Hosting an online event: hints and tips

The website also includes a range of free resources including: information leaflets, films and activities.

<https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/content/ddweekevent/>

## ACTIVITIES

SAFE SPACE  
AGREEMENT  
P2



ICE BREAKER  
ACTIVITY  
P3-4



GROUNDING  
ACTIVITY  
P5



## EVENT TEMPLATES

WHAT  
HAPPENS  
WHEN  
SOMEONE IS  
DYING?  
P6



PLANNING  
AHEAD  
P7



CARING FOR  
THE CARER  
P8



# CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR DISCUSSION

A 'safe space agreement' is a list of informal rules that will help to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable and included. You could start off by sharing the items below, and ask people if there is anything people would like to add. Leave out boxes of tissues and let people know that they are welcome to use them if they become upset.

PERSONAL  
STORIES  
STAY IN THE  
GROUP

THERE'S NO  
PRESSURE  
ON ANYONE  
TO SHARE.

IF YOU NEED  
A MOMENT,  
IT IS OK TO  
LEAVE THE  
ROOM

IT IS OK TO  
FEEL  
EMOTIONAL  
OR UPSET

LISTEN TO  
EACH OTHER

EVERYONE  
IS  
WELCOME  
TO SHARE

TRY NOT TO  
LOOK AT  
YOUR PHONE

# ICE-BREAKER ACTIVITY

## CONVERSATION MENU

A gentle introductory activity can help participants to start to feel more comfortable around each other and the issues you'll be discussing. Below we describe one potential activity, which uses a **conversation menu**.

## HOW THE ACTIVITY WORKS

Share the 'conversation menu' (overleaf) with participants.

Tell people that you're going to start off with a warm up activity, to start to help people feel more comfortable talking about these issues with each other.

## INTRODUCING THE ACTIVITY

You could say something like:

"Some of you may have heard of or taken part in death cafes – where people get together over tea and cake to talk about death with strangers. We're going to do something similar now – but where death cafes have a facilitator, we are going to use 'conversation menus' to get things started.

The conversation menus give some ideas of topics to get conversations started, and you can pick and choose what you want to talk about.

Some people might not feel they want to join in discussions straight away – that's fine and it's absolutely okay to say no."

## TIMINGS

10-15 minutes

# CONVERSATION MENU

To help us start to get to know each other, we're going to do a quick warm up activity. We'll take it in turns to introduce ourselves, and **choose one** of the questions below to answer.

## CONVERSATION MENU

Why did you want to come along to today's event?

Is there really a taboo about death, dying and bereavement in Scotland?

Are there three places you want to go before you die?

Where would you like to be when you die?

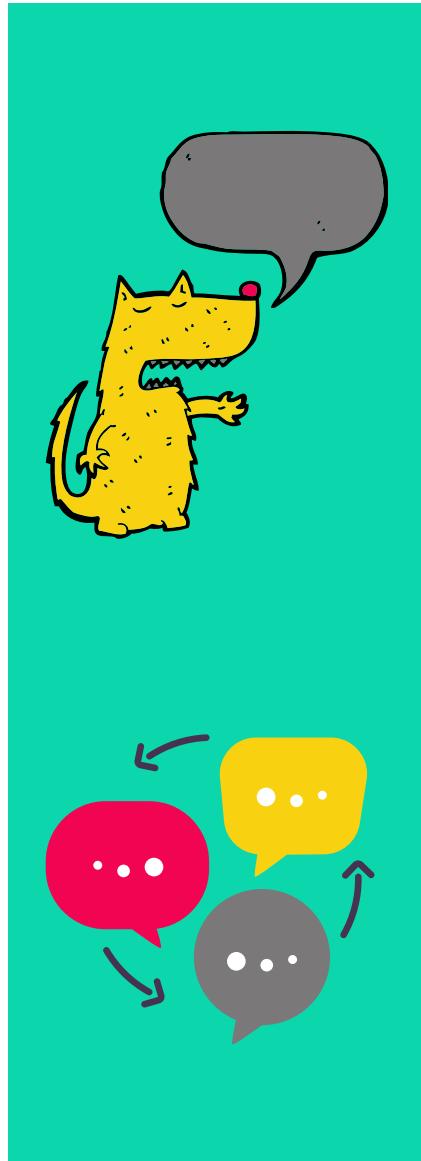
What things do you think make for a 'good death'?

Many people these days have a 'birth plan'. But what would be in a 'death plan' and when would you start writing it?

What words do you want on your tombstone?

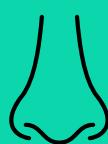
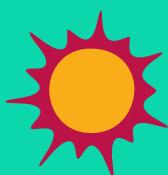
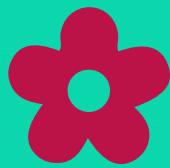
What song or music would you like at your funeral and why?

How would you like to be remembered?



# GROUNDING ACTIVITY

If your event raises issues that could cause people to feel unsettled or emotional, it can be helpful to do a grounding exercise towards the end. Here is an example of a grounding exercise you could use. Read it out calmly and in a way that gives people time to follow the directions.



## 5-4-3-2-1 Technique

Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.

What are 5 things you can see? Look for small details such as a pattern on the ceiling, the way light reflects off a surface, or an object you never noticed.

What are 4 things you can feel? Notice the sensation of clothing on your body, the sun on your skin, or the feeling of the chair you are sitting in. Pick up an object and examine its weight, texture, and other physical qualities.

What are 3 things you can hear? Pay special attention to the sounds your mind has tuned out, such as a ticking clock, distant traffic, or trees blowing in the wind.

What are 2 things you can smell? Try to notice smells in the air around you, like an air freshener or freshly mowed grass. You may also look around for something that has a scent, such as a flower or an unlit candle.

What is 1 thing you can taste? Or 1 thing you would like to taste, or have enjoyed the taste of recently.

# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE IS DYING?

This short programme will help people to understand what to expect when someone is dying and how they might be able to help provide informal support.



### 1 WELCOME

Welcome participants. Asking everyone to wear a name badge (a handwritten label will do) can help people to feel less awkward about remembering names. Introduce yourself, explain where the fire exits and toilets are.

### 2 ICE BREAKER

an icebreaker/introductory activity can help to ease people into the event - see example on page 3

### 3 FILM

Kathryn Mannix: Dying for beginners (4 minutes)

Available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayMhA1pRLeY>

### 4 DISCUSSION

Questions and discussion with a local expert, potentially a specialist palliative care doctor or nurse.

### 5 GROUNDING EXERCISE

A grounding activity can help people who are feeling emotional or unsettled due to issues raised. An example activity is on page 5.

### 6 FOLLOW-UP RESOURCES

These resources provide further information. They might also be useful discussion prompts:

<https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/plan-illness-what-happens/>

## PLANNING AHEAD

This short programme explores ways people can plan ahead to make the legal and practical consequences of serious illness and death easier to deal with.



### 1 WELCOME

Welcome participants. Asking everyone to wear a name badge (a handwritten label will do) can help people to feel less awkward about remembering names. Introduce yourself, explain where the fire exits and toilets are.

### 2 ICE BREAKER

Welcome participants and undertake an icebreaker/introductory activity. An example ice breaker activity is provided on page 3.

### 3 FILM

Show one of the following films, which introduce some issues relating to planning ahead and why it can be important:

- [Life or Death Decisions](#) (10 minutes)
- [Should everyone have an end of life plan?](#) (5 minutes)

Available here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0b\\_PW-ENf8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A0b_PW-ENf8)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/ideas/videos/should-everyone-have-an-end-of-life-plan/p099x2yh>.

### 4 DISCUSSION

Questions and discussion with local expert(s) – potentially a solicitor and a healthcare professional. This [origami game](#) could provide a useful discussion prompt:

<https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/fcp-origami/>

### 5 FOLLOW-UP RESOURCES

These resources provide further information. They might also be useful discussion prompts:

- <https://vimeo.com/user118219055/review/456990907/0cd74a2ddd>
- <https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/plan-future-care/>
- <https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/blogs/planning/>

## EVENT THEME IDEA 3

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING AFTER SOMEONE ELSE

This short programme explores how people can look after themselves when they are spending a lot of time caring for someone else.



### 1 WELCOME

Welcome participants. Asking everyone to wear a name badge (a handwritten label will do) can help people to feel less awkward about remembering names. Introduce yourself, explain where the fire exits and toilets are.

### 2 ICE BREAKER

Welcome participants and undertake an icebreaker/introductory activity. An example ice breaker activity is provided on pages 3-4.

### 3 FILM

Show the film: [Who cares for the carer?](#) (6 minutes)

Available here: <https://vimeo.com/458614684/da4da22e5f>

### 4 SHARING EXPERIENCES

Facilitated discussion to give people a chance to reflect on their own experiences of caring. Questions could include:

- What are the hardest things about being a carer?
- Are there good bits about being a carer?

### 5 DISCUSSION

Facilitated discussion acknowledging that it is important for people to look after their own wellbeing when caring for someone else, and think about how they can do this.

- What can other people (friends, family, colleagues) do to support a carer?
- What helps you to stay healthy and have a positive sense of wellbeing?

### 6 FILM

Finish with the film: [Looking after yourself and your relationship](#).

Available here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_7z-cvC4edg&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_7z-cvC4edg&t=1s).

### 7 GROUNDING ACTIVITY

A grounding activity can help people who are feeling emotional or unsettled due to issues raised. An example activity is on page 5.

### 8 FOLLOW-UP RESOURCES

<https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/support-carers/>

## FURTHER RESOURCES

Check out our [website](#) for the full range of Demystifying Death Week Event Guides:

- Designing your event
- Event Ideas: templates and activities
- Facilitation skills
- Hosting an online event: hints and tips

We also offer a range of free resources to support your event including information leaflets, films and activities.

<https://www.goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk/members-dmd/>

Email: [info@goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk](mailto:info@goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk)