



Insights Report

Dying Matters Webinar – The Importance of Being in a Good Place to Die

Wednesday, 12th May 2021

An overview of webinar programme, speaker presentations, key takeaways and audience feedback.

Includes links to speaker presentations, video and audio clips.

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Introduction

Dying Matters Week 2021 '**The Importance of Being in a Good Place to Die**' highlighted the importance of being prepared for end of life. The campaign encouraged everyone to think ahead to a time when you will need to make key decisions for yourself or for others. Death is inevitable for everyone - death, dying and bereavement will impact all of us, multiple times.

This year the message is that death is a life event we can plan for and should plan for. Planning and discussing our own death with the people who are important to us is an element of '**self-care**' and allows us to live life more fully. It is also an expression of love; love for those we will leave behind ensuring that we make those important choices so they don't have to at a time of crisis.

Collaboration

For the first time the **Northern Compassionate Communities Steering Group and Compassionate Communities NW** collaborated in jointly hosting a 2-hour webinar that highlighted key areas where we can prepare for a good death for the person dying and those closest to them.

Key Areas:

- **Spirituality**
- **Funeral Plans**
- **Bereavement**
- **Advance Care Plans**
- **Digital Legacy**

Pre-event management including marketing, registration and communication was executed using Eventbrite. The webinar was hosted and recorded on Zoom, with the technical assistance of **Project Echo**. [Recording of webinar](#).

Event Content

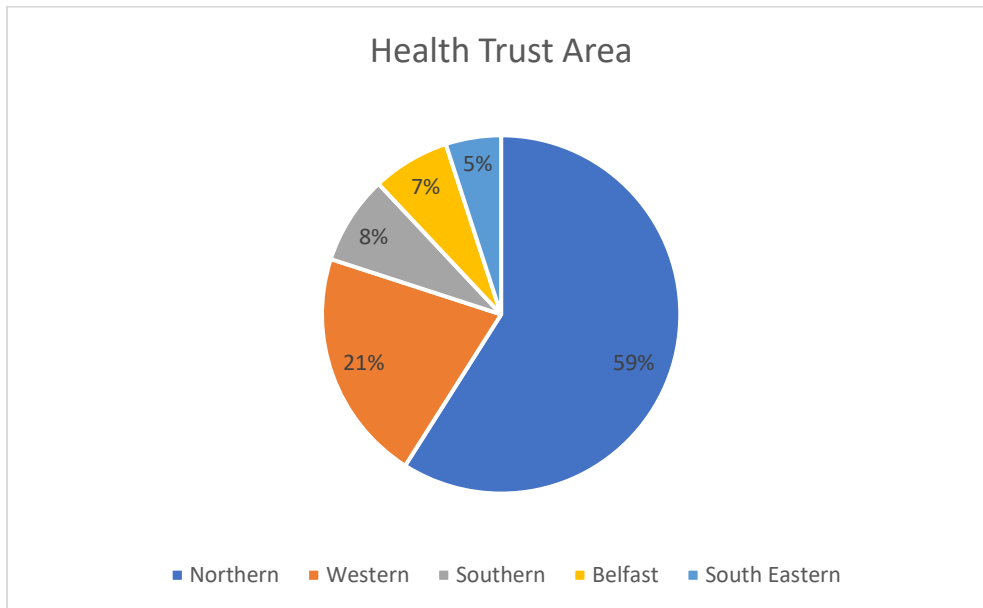
The online event hosted 4 speakers who presented on a number of key areas that help us to prepare to be in a good place to die.

A local lady, whose received palliative care in Foyle Hospice before his death, recited excerpts from her personal collection of poems. Her lived experience provided insight into death, dying and bereavement. A short film produced by Dying Matters highlighted the importance of Advance Care Plans.

The full **Programme** is available on *page 4*.

Participants by Health Trust Area

The event was registered by 261 and attended by **177 participants** who came from across Northern Ireland



Participants contributed to an engaging conversation throughout the event. Participant feedback illustrated that the event was successful in providing an informative and thought-provoking session regarding the **5 Steps to Preparing for a Good Death**.

Programme

10.00	Welcome Mrs Jenny Dougan, Community navigator, MEAAP
10.05	Opening Remarks Mrs Alison Campbell-Smyth, Assistant Director of Community Care, NHSCT
10.15	Life After Death Mrs Margaret Rowlandson recites from her collection of poems about her lived experience following the death of her husband.
10.20	Dying Matters Short Film Screening – ‘I Didn’t Want That’ A carefully crafted short film which highlights the importance of making your end of life wishes clear: from deciding whether you wish to be resuscitated to planning your funeral.
10.40	Discussion & Questions
10.50	The Importance of Being Spiritually Ready for Dying Mr John Wonnacott, Chaplain, Macmillan Unit, Antrim
11.05	Comfort Break
11.15	Be Prepared Mr Gary Haire, President of NAFD, Funeral Director
11.30	How - and why - Everyone needs to prepare for their ‘Digital Afterlife’ Dr Elaine Kasket, Author of ‘All the Ghosts in the Machine: <i>The Digital Afterlife of Your Personal Data</i> (2020). Counselling Psychologist and Professor of Psychology at the University of Wolverhampton
12.00	Discussion & Questions
12.15	Life After Death Mrs Margaret Rowlandson recites from her collection of poems about her lived experience following the death of her husband.
12.20	Closing Remarks Mr Donall Henderson, Chief Executive of The Foyle Hospice
12.25	St Agnes Choir - ‘Thankful’ Evaluation

Help us spread the awareness by using the following twitter handles:
#InAGoodPlace #DMAW21 @northerntrust @CompassionateNW

Key Take-Aways

Being in a good place to die takes planning!

The 5 steps to being in a good place to die will help you organise and prepare for dying.

1. Write your will



Write down what you want to happen to your money and any possessions that you have.

The internet has lots of information and websites that can help to guide you through writing your will. Or you may feel more comfortable with the help of a solicitor.

If you do not have a will, the court will decide what happens to your money and possessions.

2. Plan your funeral

Plan your funeral in advance and write down your wishes for what you want to happen when you die.

Planning your funeral reduces stress and anxiety for your loved ones and allows them to grieve without worrying about the decisions they made.



Coffin? Cardboard? Service? No Service? Music? Location? Burial or Cremation? Eulogy?

5. Share your wishes

Share your wishes with loved ones or with a nominated person that you trust.



It's important that someone knows that you have written down your wishes and made your will.

Leave instructions so people know where to find your funeral wishes and will when you die.

4. Organ Donation?

Talk to your family about your wishes for organ donation and write your wishes down.



Not everyone that dies is suitable to donate organs, think about any organs that you may be able to donate and ensure your family know your wishes.

Last year, 11 people died in Northern Ireland while waiting on a donor organ.

3. Plan your care

Thinking about your health care is very important.

If you could not make decisions for yourself, who would you want to make them? Where would you want to be cared for?

Writing down what you want and do not want is called an 'Advance Care Plan'. Give your doctor a copy of your advance care plan.



The Importance of Being Spiritually Ready for Dying Mr John Wonnacott, Chaplain, Macmillan Unit, Antrim

On spiritual awareness....

“Our spirituality can be expressed in a religious way, but first and foremost it is that that gives us purpose and meaning in life. Our spiritual pulse and spiritual needs are very individual that we become more aware of when faced with life’s challenges.”

On making plans

“Making plans frees up energy so that we can get on with living. We need to dispel the myth that making plans fast-forwards them.”

The trinity of mind, body and soul.....

“Our spiritual wellbeing positively impacts our physical and emotional health.”

The role of the chaplain ...

“The role of the chaplain is to journey with us, to listen and to be another resource. It can help to have a trusted person and/or spiritual or non-religious leader with us on that journey can provide specialist palliative pastoral support helping us with our spiritual well-being.”

Be prepared **Mr Gary Haire, President of NAFD, Funeral Director**

On the role of the funeral director ...

“One of the things we need to do is to think through what our funeral wishes are, and that’s were local funeral directors can be very important. Talking to your local funeral director means you have a personal face to talk to.”

On what to think about ...

“You need to think through, what are my funeral wishes? There are 2 parts to a funeral, firstly there are the funeral services and secondly, 3rd party, both elements have costs that come into play. Some things you want to consider is what type of coffin do you want? Do you simply want a hearse and not a limousine? Do you want a burial service at the local cemetery, or at a green cemetery, or cremation? All have a cost attached to them.”

On necessary paperwork...

“An important thing from a funeral director’s perspective is, do we have the right paperwork? If you have a grave, do we have a grave lease?. We need to supply that to whoever is carrying out the excavation work.”

How - and why - everyone needs to prepare for their 'digital afterlife'

Dr Elaine Kasket

What is your digital afterlife?

“Digital afterlives are the zeros and ones we leave behind when we die; they might be called digital footprint, digital legacies, digital assets, or digital remains.”

On the importance of taking care of your digital afterlife

“A large percentage of the services we use don’t have anything in their terms and conditions about what happens to our data when we die. In most places the law has yet to keep up with technology, so for now it’s largely up to you.”

On who has control once you are gone....

“Bereaved people can sometimes encounter emotional difficulties because they can access too much digitally stored information about their loved one, and sometimes there are issues with having too little. Technology companies control over our personal data often doesn’t lessen when we die. It increases. They can decide how we will be remembered online and by whom.”

Life After Death

Mrs Margaret Rowlandson

Margaret described how writing something for her husband, Paul’s, funeral service inspired her to transcribe her thoughts and emotions into poetry.

‘The Funeral’

*Love cannot heal your broken body
Or mend my broken heart
But it will enfold me
While we are apart.*

I found having to face these feelings and put them into words helped me to cope with them especially at difficult times when he isn’t there and that’s how it’s going to be.

On the importance of decluttering

I would like to add the importance of doing as much decluttering as you can and making sure that your family know where all the important documents are, such your will, insurance certificates and things like that.

Paul had made good financial provision for us but he was a terrible hoarder. I had literally mountains of paperwork to climb over and under until I found the relevant documents. And that can be quite emotionally draining as well as physically draining.”

Life After Death

A woman’s reflection on the death of her husband and her life thereafter

A collection of poems by
Margaret Rowlandson



Feedback & Evaluation

Feedback also confirmed that the content was appropriate and encouraged further thought and action.

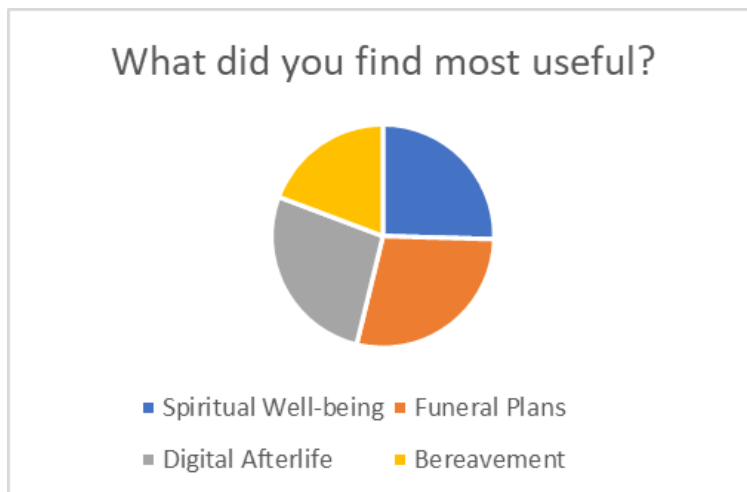
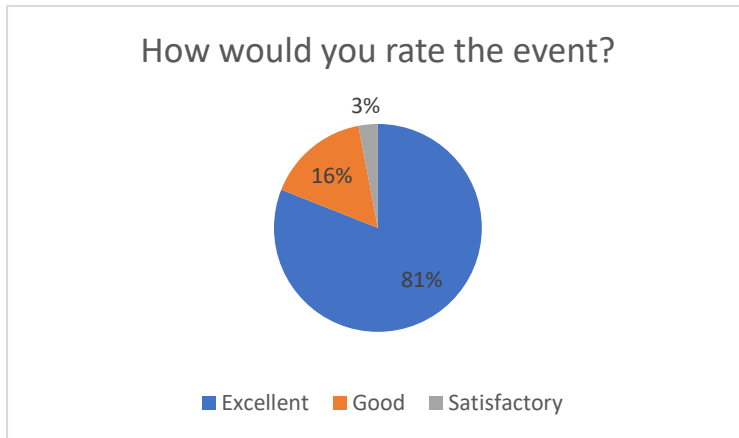
- **80% of participants reporting that they would put in place some end-of-life plans**
- **97% of participants would like to take part in a similar event in the future**

I think there is only one natural burial ground on island of Ireland - in Wexford
<https://www.greengraveyard.com/>

Fantastic everyone great webinar. I had been nervous about discussing death with my mum but after this I feel much more equipped, thank you.

The '99' story brought back memories of my grandfather who asked for a '99' about an hour before he passed away. Being able to fulfil loved ones last wishes and have these special memories stays with families long after death.

Evaluation Results



Northern Partners



Cruse Bereavement Care

HSC Public Health Agency

WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT

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Integrated Care Partnerships

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COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITIES

Foyle Hospice Together we care

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KSC Community Partnership

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