

# Dying2Learn

MOOC ON  
DEATH AND DYING

**Online Course engages  
ageing Australians in open  
discussions about death and  
dying.**

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**CARESEARCH**<sup>®</sup>  
palliative care knowledge network

CareSearch is  
funded by the  
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We give respect to our  
elders past & present,  
& acknowledge the  
traditional custodians  
of these lands



# Background

## CareSearch:

- Free website providing access to evidence-based information on palliative care.
- Sections for Nurses, GPs, Allied Health, Aged Care & for patients/carers.
- PROBLEM: dying & palliative care are the 'elephant in the room'. SOLUTION?...

## MOOCs:

- Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) - new technology with potential to reach people throughout Australia & worldwide.
- MOOCs = freely available short online courses; flexible learning via internet.
- Innovative technology for educational interaction & knowledge exchange.
- CareSearch harnessed this opportunity by developing a MOOC, Dying2Learn.
- Aimed to facilitate social discussion about death, dying & palliative care, & build community death awareness.

# Methods and Results

## Methods:

- Designed on OpenLearning platform & made freely available to the public
- 5-week course with educational content, reflection activities & peer interaction
- Collected demographic data at enrolment & Pre+Post assessment of death attitudes
- General evaluation & MOOC engagement metrics extracted from platform
- Mixed-methods data analysis

## Results:

- Participants: 4718 people enrolled in Dying2Learn in last 3 years; 50,000 comments
- 2017 cohort = 1960 enrollees (majority Australian)
  - Average age 47 years, range from 17 to 82 years
  - **17%** participants aged over 60
  - Older participants made significantly more progress through the course
  - Full completion of the course was highest in the 60+ age group

# Implications

**97%**

**OF OUR  
PARTICIPANTS**  
enjoyed  
Dying2Learn

**96%**

**OF OUR  
PARTICIPANTS**  
felt comfortable  
talking about dying  
and death by  
the end of  
Dying2Learn

“The course gave me exactly what I needed – a greater inner awareness and increased confidence to talk more openly about death and dying.”

“Participating in Dying2Learn was uplifting and inspiring as I shared stories. The more we talk about something we fear, the less we fear it.”

# Conclusions

- A MOOC was a viable strategy for stimulating community discussion about death
- Dying2Learn MOOC platform was:
  - well-utilised by people varying in age, with very active participation by over 60s
  - helped participants feel more comfortable discussing death
- Highlights the potential of these innovative online learning platforms for increasing community awareness of death, dying & palliative care
- Age was no barrier to participation
- The interactive online course appealed to and benefitted older & younger participants alike
- Potential positive implications for aged care

“ Loving it (Dying2learn) more each day.

Working in an aged care facility, I had never used the word '**dying**'. I did yesterday to the wife of a resident. She smiled, cried, hugged me and said **thank you** and went to spend the last hours with her husband.

So special. ”