

Dying 2 Learn

MOOC ON
DEATH AND DYING

Massive Online Open Courses as a way of engaging rural health professionals & communities in open discussions about death & dying.

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SARRAH National Conference 2018

CARESEARCH[®]
palliative care knowledge network

CareSearch is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health

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



Background

CareSearch:

- Free website providing easy access to evidence-based information on palliative care.
- Has sections for Allied Health, Nurses, GPs, Indigenous care, & for consumers.
- 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, networking & knowledge exchange.
- CareSearch harnessed this opportunity by developing a MOOC, Dying2Learn.
- Aimed to facilitate social discussion about death, dying & palliative care Australia-wide, & build community death awareness.

Methods and Results

Methods:

- Designed on OpenLearning platform & made freely available to the public.
- 5-week course including educational content, reflection activities & peer interaction.
- Collected demographic information 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)
 - **38%** living in regional or remote Australia
 - **73%** were health professionals (**19%** in Allied Health)
 - Similar levels of course progress across groups.

Implications

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

97%

OF OUR PARTICIPANTS
enjoyed
Dying2Learn

96%

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

“I am a grief counsellor living in a remote part of Australia. I have always felt very much alone and without any support. This MOOC has made me feel part of a community (a great feeling) and given me so many resources to refer to... a wonderful and empowering learning experience”

Conclusions

- A MOOC was a viable strategy for stimulating community discussion about death.
- Dying2Learn MOOC platform was:
 - well-utilised by health professionals & community members in rural Australia
 - 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
 - health professional education & CPD opportunities, particularly for health professionals living in rural areas.

“Discussing death and dying without offending anyone was liberating and has prompted me to get all my ducks in a row.”