

May 8th, 2018

Encouraging thinking about death and dying for a good end of life



The specialist palliative care team at South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust will be helping to break down the taboo surrounding talking about death and dying during Dying Matters Awareness Week from May 14th to 20th.

The theme for the week is *'What can you do.....in your community?'* and they have organised events at South Tyneside District Hospital, on Tuesday, May 15th, and in The Viking Centre, Jarrow, on Thursday, May 17th, supported by local charities and organisations including St Clare's Hospice, Jarrow.

Together, they will provide information and advice on everything from future care arrangements to funeral planning. They will also encourage members of the public to get involved by writing down their bucket list entries and decorating pebbles with

words and motifs summing up their thoughts related to topics such as *What makes you tick?*, *What gives you strength?* and *Who do you turn to for support?*

Dr Anna Porteous, Consultant in Palliative Care with the Trust, said: “Dying Matters Awareness Week presents a great opportunity to break down the barriers and taboos which exist around death and dying. Having conversations about what is important to us can help to ensure that people get the care and support they want at end of life and that they are able to make the most of the time they have left. It can also help the bereaved if they feel they are able to carry out their loved ones’ wishes.”

Wendy McGauley, Head of Fundraising and Communications at St Clare’s Hospice, said: “St Clare’s is the local independent hospice for the South Tyneside community. We provide a range of services including an inpatient unit, day care, holistic therapies and spiritual support to people and their families affected by life limiting conditions. We are delighted to be working with colleagues from South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust to help local people to talk about death, dying and bereavement.”

Dr Porteous and her colleagues within the hospital and community specialist palliative care team look after people whose illness cannot be cured and who may need more specialist help. Reasons for this may include:

- the assessment and management of difficult symptoms
- help and support with emotional/ psychological and spiritual distress
- advice on social and practical issues
- information about treatment and care

The specialist palliative care nurses are an ‘adopted’ Macmillan Cancer Support service, which allows them access to more training and education to further strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge in all aspects of palliative care.

The Dying Matters Awareness Week event at South Tyneside District Hospital on Tuesday, May 15th, will be in the Ingham Wing main corridor from 1.30pm-

4.30pm. The event at Viking Centre, Jarrow, on Thursday, May 17th, will be from 11am-3pm.

Dying Matters is a coalition of 32,000 members across England and Wales which aims to help people talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement, and to make plans for the end of life. For more information regarding Dying Matters go to the website: <https://www.dyingmatters.org/>

Simple steps for the best end of life experience for you and your loved ones

1. Make a will
2. Record your funeral wishes
3. Plan your future care and support
4. Register as an organ donor
5. Tell your loved ones your wishes

ENDS

Photo caption: Consultant in Palliative Care Dr Anna Porteous, centre, End of Life Care Facilitator Sharon Rooney, second from left, and Specialist Palliative Care Nurses Tina Mitchell, Bev Ferguson and Dawn Townsley with some of the decorated pebbles

Issued on behalf of South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust by **Kay Jordan**

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