



善終服務會
SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION
OF HOSPICE CARE LIMITED

Death education! It is all about living.

For over 14 years, The Society for the Promotion of Hospice Care has worked to share the message of hospice care. As hospice care develops, we see greater acceptance of the need to care for people approaching death. More often we are talking about providing a good death but also focusing on quality of life.

Even as the pace of life in Hong Kong becomes faster and faster, there is a growing interest amongst Hong Kong people to talk about death and dying. This interest comes from many walks of life - from the elderly, the young and caregivers.

A recent euthanasia debate in Legco is an example of this discussion. People now want to explore the options they have for care long before death. An 8-week programme with Agency for Volunteer Services and SPHC sparked hot debate from participants. There was a realization that by talking about death, a number of fears and anxieties could be dispelled. An assignment for the group included talking with family members about funeral wishes and living wills. Here we have a group of healthy individuals, talking about death confidently and openly. Death is the one universal fact that we all face, it cannot be prevented but what the Hong Kong community can achieve is a way to begin dialogue on death and dying.

Through death education, dying is no longer a taboo and we can openly embrace those facing loss and bereavement.

The Jessie and Thomas Tam Centre has first hand experience of how we can actively help the bereaved by listening and acknowledging their pain. The Centre has recently produced videotape sharing the insights of those who have experienced death and loss. The video is primarily to introduce bereavement counselling and the grief process. There is also an accompanying booklet and pamphlet. Health care professionals are invited to share these tools with newly bereaved. For free copies call 2725 7693.

Through the generous support of The Hongkong Bank Foundation, we are also able to bring death education to many more health care professionals. We hope to be able to support people in delivering competent compassionate care for the dying. Our training initiatives focus on skills but also address the meaning of a good death. Breaking through the anxiety and fears in caring for the dying can lead to a deeper understanding of dying. "*Adding life to days when days cannot be added to life*".

Corr in "Death and Dying, Life and Living" talks of tasks people want to achieve as they cope with dying. These tasks like the care we provide are holistic. Corr reminds us that as we live our lives with self-determination and family involvement, we will face death.

Although the discussions focus on living with grief and coping with death, the outcomes are positive! Through our death education programmes, we stress living.

Professor Robert Neimeyer a leading figure in bereavement and death education will this year be visiting Hong Kong. As part of the Hong Kong International Cancer Congress, Dr Neimeyer will focus on *survival* skills. The conference takes place at the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine 26th until 28th September 2001. Free papers welcome. Abstract deadline 15 July 2001. For more details call Lesley Sinclair 2868 1211.