

AB013. Embracing life—the Bethlehem Schools’ Project, an “icebreaker” and “a foot in the door”

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Abstract: This workshop details a Partnership involving a High school, a Hospital (Calvary Health Care Bethlehem), La Trobe University and Palliative Care Victoria which seeks to support Community Capacity and resilience in dealing with Life-Limiting illness, death, dying and Loss. This alliance has produced an educational resource which may be used, not only as a tool to normalize death, but also as a means of exploring ‘keys to well-being’ at any stage of life, through any loss or challenge. This workshop features a template which has been trialled, adapted and evaluated in High School, workshop and Hospital induction settings within Australia. Responses thus far have been “overwhelmingly positive”. Translating evidence of positive outcomes into Education & Health Care Systems, is a challenge—this workshop offers a means of approaching

both. The conclusion of the workshop provides a number of insights: (I) engaging communities in discussions about well-being and harnessing the insights of youth is a palatable means of discussing well-being at end-of-life; (II) what we know, as a community about supporting people with life-limiting illness is applicable across the span of life—not just at the end; (III) just as it takes a village to raise a child—it takes a village to ensure a quality end-of life experience. What began as a one-off hospital immersion for Secondary School students has grown to become a sustainable educational resource, applicable across a number of domains—with the capacity to become an evidence-based means of increasing community EOL capacity. This workshop details the evolution of a community partnership, which produced an evaluated, sustainable, educational resource encouraging conversations about death and loss whilst emphasizing the essentials of well-being. It is a potential “foot in the door” of the education system and an “ice-breaker” for new staff/students to Palliative care.

Keywords: Palliative care; community; end-of-life

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