

# Healthy End of Life Project (HELP)

*Offering & providing, asking & accepting help*



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PROJECT

## A framework for Compassionate Communities

The Healthy End of Life Project (HELP) is an evidence-based community development framework that aims to increase community capability and capacity around death, dying and bereavement.

HELP is a practical approach to building compassionate communities, designed to create a collaborative culture that attends to local community needs at the end of life.

The name indicates our intention to promote health in end of life care and to change two linked social norms that reduce the effectiveness of community development programs at the end of life; 1) despite their willingness to do so, people didn't know what to offer or how to offer help and 2) carers' automatically declined offers of help, despite needing it, and often despite having rich social networks.

## Creating Community Care Networks for End of Life Support

### HELP Community Asset Mapping Guide

#### How do we start?

Based on evidence and experience, we recommend your community creates community support networks by starting with a 'Community Asset Mapping' group activity.

This process will bring together your community within a strengths-based and solution-focused framework from the beginning. This resources will step you through this process and we recommend this to:

- promote community retention
- increase individual and community investment
- cultivate a collaborative local culture, and
- to ensure sustainable outcomes

#### Why map existing and potential community assets?

There are a few reasons to map local assets as part of HELP:

- Don't start from scratch – **build on what already exists!**
- The process of mapping itself **provides valuable information** about your community to inform your project
- Talking with people (mapping) **generates interest** along the way, helps you to **identify local leaders** and begins to shift thinking about the end of life (gathering like-minded people)
- It reinforces that everyone has a role in end of life care in the community



HEALTHY  
END OF  
LIFE  
PROJECT

- You can create a repository of resources in a single location that is both useful to draw upon while at the same time promotes a culture of collaboration and inclusion in the community. **This will be an exciting achievement to be celebrated!**
- Bringing together a variety of community resources with different skills and focus areas provides the best chance of producing **sustainable outcomes** for your community.
- Community asset-based mapping will help **identify and prioritise the gaps** to be addressed, but **within a solution-focused framework**
- Creatively connecting existing community assets in unexpected ways can address gaps. **Use what you have in innovative ways!**

## What are community assets?

HELP focuses on two ways of thinking about the assets in your local community:

- 1) **Existing** – currently contributing to end of support in the local area
- 2) **Potential** – have the potential to incorporate end of life support into their portfolio. Creative thinking means existing resources can be used in new or novel ways to generate solutions to local issues

\*Assets fall into five main categories, and it's a good idea to cast the net broadly when trying to identify your local assets. They can be thought of as the 'social capital' residing in your local area, or what resources you have to work with:

Type	Description	Examples
<b>Structural</b>	<b>Physical attributes</b> – build environment, natural environment, special considerations (transport, access), location (geography, remoteness)	<i>Cemeteries, community hubs, gathering places, schools, public bereavement structures (memorials of various sorts), neighbourhood houses, social anchors</i>
<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Local culture</b> – a sense of community, a willingness to help others, places or events where community gather	<i>Country Fire Authority, community festivals, faith-based services, rituals, public bereavement, connected communities, inclusive practices for diverse groups</i>
<b>Economic</b>	<b>Economic resources</b> – local businesses, fund raising, government funding and support	<i>Legal services, chamber of commerce, community support funds, financial advice, charities, opportunity shops</i>
<b>Human</b>	<b>People</b> in your community – local leaders, people with particular skills, people with equipment/resources, people with influence	<i>Community groups, activists, community development workers, social change agents, skilled workers, artists, musicians, students, hobby groups</i>
<b>Services</b>	<b>Health and community services</b> - the type and number of services that are available to the community	<i>Community health, bereavement services, funeral services, hospice care, respite services, aged care, pharmacy</i>

## The process of mapping the assets of your community

We've outlined a process to guide you through good community development practices to increase your chance of success. Evidence shows that starting with a smaller working group of interested citizens or leaders that grows organically is the most effective way to work, and uses community resources efficiently.

**As capacity grows in both individual skills and number of people, your tipping point to change community culture will be soon be reached.** Mapping can be done as a group activity over one, two or many sessions.

In your group, work through the following questions together. You can record your insights (on butchers paper, a volunteer scribe) if you think that's helpful. Allow time to reflect and think about these questions together, giving everybody an opportunity to contribute. **This will foster rich discussion.**

Try to explore community assets and gaps adequately, while working towards and within a solution-focused framework to collectively guide your discussion. You might want to explore one question per gathering, allowing time for ideas to mature.

### 1. What's already happening around end of life in your local area?

- a. What's working well?
- b. What's not working well?
- c. Where are the gaps in end of life support in the community?

\*Map and document services, programs, activities and initiatives that currently contribute to end of life care in the community.

*Examples may include local hospice and palliative care services, respite services, funeral services, faith-based groups that provide end of life support.*

### 2. What are the existing and potential assets in your local community?

- a. What are the local places where community connect?
- b. Where are the community hubs in your community?
- c. What already brings people together? Both regular gatherings such as clubs or larger events such as sport.
- d. Who and where are the social anchors in your community? Why are they central points of connection in everyday local life?

**\*Identify, discuss and generate** you list of existing and potential (refer page one) local community assets. Identify community organisations, businesses, clubs, services and groups that could contribute resources and assistance to local people who are seeking support to remain in their home for end-of-life care.

Use the table describing the various types of assets on page 2 to brainstorm. Assets aren't wrong or right. Be exhaustive and creative in your approach. Don't immediately dismiss any left field ideas that come up.

Then, review your community assets together and discuss:

- Is there anything surprising about your list?
- Are there unexpected assets you discovered?
- Did you find more or less than you expected?
- What did you learn during this exercise about your community?
- Is there anyone else in the community that could be involved?
- What's missing in your list?
- How could these gaps be potentially filled?
- What needs remain for local end of life community support?
- How can these remaining needs be met with existing or potential assets?

### 3. What should happen with your list of community assets and resources?

You now have a community repository of existing and potential assets and resources to create community support networks for local people and their carers' as the end of life. **This is an incredible local asset within itself.**

**REMEMBER:** draw upon your existing community platforms or assets and build end of life matters into them. *The idea is to incorporate the end of our lives into everyday living.* To attend to the social dimensions of our dying, death and bereavement. This is where it belongs. After all, we live right up until the moment we die.

*\*Collectively discuss what your next steps should be. What should the group do with this record of rich information?*

Should you:

- Share it? With whom, how, what where and importantly why?
- Understanding *why* it should be shared is central to what your group would like to achieve in your community, and will inform the 'who, what, when and how'.
- Let people, groups or organisations know that they've been identified as an end of life asset?
- Develop a community repository of resources for local end of life support?
- Can a local organisation make it accessible for community?
  - i. Local neighbourhood house?
  - ii. Community hub?
  - iii. Library?
- How will the community know the information is available?
  - i. Information pack for new residents?
  - ii. Community health service referral?
  - iii. Council referral?

## Example: 1) Existing community assets

Name of organisation/group	Contact details	Role in the community	Contribution to support at end of life
e.g. Local pharmacy	Main St, Town	Sell & offer advice on medications, health & beauty products	Sell products relating to end of life care
e.g. Respite facility	High St, Town	Provide 24/7 care to give carers/families a break	Provide care for people with life limiting illnesses
e.g. Family Medical Clinic	Town centre	Practice family medicine	Prescribe and support for home-based palliative care

## Example: 2) Potential community assets

Name of organisation	Contact details	Role in the community	Potential contribution to end of life support
Local pharmacy	Main St, Town	Sell & offer advice on medications, health & beauty products	Hold a pay-it-forward fund that locals contribute to, helping those in financial hardship to obtain medication & products
U3A, Men's Shed, Rotary, Lions, CWA etc.	Main St, Town	Provide education programs & activities	Free room use for meetings, training, information sessions. Advertise HELP through their networks
Neighbourhood House	Main St	Provides general community support, education, hobby groups, intergenerational activities	Practical assistance from volunteers to support home-based end of life care, bereavement support etc.

## Healthy End of Life Project (HELP) Resources

Other HELP resources include:

1. Professional Information Booklet
2. HELP Home Care Network Support Plan (Individuals)

[www.latrobe.edu.au/pcu](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/pcu)

For more information:

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