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Free help for families caring for a loved one who is dying

Canberra chosen to host LifeCircle pilot programme

The ACT has been chosen as a pilot site for a free programme that connects carers of people in the last stages of life with a local guide who has deep experience caring for others in their last days. The partnership helps carers become better prepared, supported and connected to the local services that will help them make the best decisions and spend as much quality time with their loved one in their final months and weeks.

Each year, around 1800 people die in the ACT, and there is often a significant gap between what people hope for and what happens as they navigate the social, emotional and financial repercussions of terminal illness and the end of life of older people. LifeCircle is a social change organisation working to improve the way families experience the last stage of life.

Death is a truly universal experience that will affect us all at multiple times through our lives, but people who are caring for someone who is dying will often feel:

- Confused by a sudden diagnosis
- Uncertain, unprepared and unsupported
- Fear or anger about what to expect
- Out of their depth when it comes to important decisions that may need to be made quickly
- Confused about navigating the system or what resources may be available
- Without kindness, support or the knowledge of someone who has experienced this before

Melissa Reader, the CEO of LifeCircle, cared for her husband through a terminal disease but was only able to identify what could have made the experience better years later. “I was unprepared and felt unsupported and alone. No one was able to talk openly with me about what was happening, not his doctors, our families and not him. I did not have the strength or skills to fully understand all of our options, and we never talked about his wishes, fears and dreams for his children. Reflecting now, I know that the guidance, support and the experience of people who had done this before could have changed everything.”

Local LifeCircle guides all have a lived experience of caring for someone through the last stages of life—often tens of hundreds of people—and are trained to support and guide others going through the experience. Anyone who is caring for someone in the last stages of life can talk with a LifeCircle Guide today and begin accessing

information and resources on a single online platform designed for quick and easy access. The service is free, and carers can sign up to the program without a medical referral. Contact LifeCircle at lifecircle.org.au or by SMS on 0474 480 367.

Melissa is available for an interview about the LifeCircle pilot programme and how carers can immediately access help. The Snow Foundation supports LifeCircle in the ACT.

For an interview, please contact:

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