

Lets talk about dying



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Presentation Summary

Greg Konen In Peter Saul's (2011) "Let's Talking about Dying" talk, he opened up with a very poignant statement that when 2000 brain cells die daily he argues that our dying process really truly has started. As a physician, he reports that he has seen many changes in the last thirty years. One significant change is the role of technology in healthcare. Technology, he argues, is credited with life prolonging, rather than life saving.

He also states that chronic diseases are now taking control in the dying process. He postulated that the four ways to die are:

1. sudden death,
2. terminal illness,
3. organ failure,
4. frailty (Saul, 2011).

Sudden death is declining due to technology and increased education. Terminal illness is usually reserved for the younger person. Organ failure will lead people into the Intensive Care Unit of the local hospital. He reports that there is seven times more stress associated with this type of death (Saul, 2011).

He also states that one in five United States citizens will experience this type of death (Saul, 2011). The final way to die, frailty, is what most people will experience. Life longevity breeds frailty. This dwindling capacity is an inevitable part of aging (Saul, 2011). This increased longevity leads to longer life; not necessarily better life (Saul, 2011). The key for healthcare professionals is respecting patient choices (Saul, 2011).

To explore this concept, Saul undertook some research efforts to explore the dying process in Australia. He found that one in one hundred patients had advanced directives which he called a “ dialogue” (Saul, 2011). A chart reviewed showed that the healthcare profession failed to address the needs of advanced directives with their patients (Saul, 2011). Saul argued that respecting patient choices should just be normal practice for hospitals (Saul, 2011).

He summarized his talk by stating that the two most important questions regarding the dying process are:

- who do you want to make your decisions?
- have you spoken to that person? (Saul, 2011).

His closing quote by Dame Cicely Saunders, “ You matter because you are you, and you matter to the last moment of your life” is a poignant reminder that most people want, and deserve control, in the dying process.

Reference

Saul, T. , (2011, November). Let’s talk about dying.

Retrieved from [http://www. ted. com/talks/peter_saul_let_s_talk_about_dying. html](http://www.ted.com/talks/peter_saul_let_s_talk_about_dying.html)