



PRESS RELEASE 21.4.11

Breaking 'The Last Taboo' - Learning to Talk About Dying

NORTH DEVON MARKS NATIONAL DYING MATTERS AWARENESS WEEK 16-22 MAY 2011

It is always hard to discuss, but it is something everyone must face at some time. We are talking of course about the subject of death, often known as 'The Last Taboo'. A series of events are being held in North Devon in May to mark a national campaigning week which aims to help people overcome the difficulties of talking about death, dying and bereavement. Dying Matters Awareness Week takes place from 16th – 22nd May, with events being staged all around the country.

Annee Bury from The Bideford Apothecary has been involved in organizing some of the events in North Devon and is a member of the national group Dying Matters. (The organization has around 14,000 members - including groups within the NHS, independent and voluntary health care specialists - and aims to change public attitudes and behaviour towards death and dying.)

The following events are being held in North Devon to mark Dying Matters Awareness Week:

- **Saturday 14th May, OPEN DAY**, 10.00 - 4.00pm The Bideford Apothecary, 45 Mill Street, Bideford. **'Let's Talk About Dying'** hosted by Annee Bury. All welcome. Please drop in and find out more. Including 2.30 pm **Talk with Annee Bury on 'Planning ahead for end of life'**. Please book in advance for this talk. Tel 01237 421252 or 07812 179059.
- **Monday 16th May, 'Planning a Funeral Party' with Annee Bury**. 6.00pm to 8.00pm, Froot Loop Cafe, 45A Mill Street, Bideford. Please book in advance. Tel 01237 421252 or 07812 179059.
- **Awareness Day Green Lanes, Barnstaple. Wednesday 18th May, 10.30 - 4.00 pm, North Devon Dying Matters Group: 'Let's Talk About Dying'** – An exhibition and opportunity to find out all there is to know about 'dying' including options and choices for funerals and what you need to consider and plan for. Come and talk to representatives from a variety of local services which provide support for dying people and the bereaved in North Devon, including NDDH, North Devon Community Palliative Care team, North Devon Hospice, Age Concern, Befriending Dying, the Crematorium, Registrars, Funeral Directors, Funeral Celebrants, Cruse and Families in Grief.

Annee is currently launching her own business, Befriending Dying, which provides compassionate support and advice for families in North Devon facing dying and bereavement, as well as offering a funeral advice and planning service. She believes strongly that more should be done to help families face the often difficult and painful issues surrounding death. Cont.

(Press release - North Devon Marks National Dying Awareness Week cont.)

"I am passionate about the need to encourage people to talk about and acknowledge dying. There are very few subjects that our society finds it difficult to talk about, but death is one of them. Many other societies deal with death far better than we do. Time and again I see families and individuals struggling with the emotions and traumas that a diagnosis of terminal illness or an unexpected death can bring. This is a period when people often feel out of control and afraid, not knowing what to expect or what to do next. It is not unusual to see families torn apart by the stresses and emotions surrounding death.

"We are happy to talk about birth and develop birth plans, so why not do the same for our dying? The end of someone's life is such an important time. If you can get this right it helps the whole family particularly in bereavement. It is so important that we learn to talk more openly about these issues, to learn to accept what is happening rather than to fear it, to see dying as a natural process, and to find a way through the minefield of emotions that death brings.

"Often an increased openness and acceptance of reality can lead to the final months of a person's life being much more peaceful and fulfilling, not just for the person involved, but for all the relatives. With the right support, dying people and families can fully explore the options for end of life care, and discuss any wishes for the funeral.

"I am delighted to support Dying Matters Awareness Week because it encourages us all to stop and think about this issue that all families will face at some time or another. I wholeheartedly agree with the aim of Dying Matters to make a 'good death' the norm, and I would like to encourage people in North Devon to attend one of the events being held locally to mark this national week."

Annee Bury is a trained nurse, healer and funeral celebrant. She has a wealth of personal and professional experience of helping people, both children and adults, as they come to the end of their lives. She has worked in two hospices, North Devon Hospice and Dorothy House Hospice in Bath as Head of Education where she developed and ran courses and conferences to help doctors, nurses and carers improve their end of life care. In the past few years Annee has focused particularly on helping older people, including those with dementia, and has recently been involved with the Gold Standards Framework, a training programme to improve end of life standards in care homes.

Annee's clients find the service she offers invaluable. One of the people she helped earlier this year said the following:

"I had never really had any dealings with death before, and it certainly wasn't talked about in my family. So the phone call from the nursing home to say my mother was unlikely to last the day was scary. Annee's calm compassionate support enabled me to do all the things that I had dreaded and she was able to support the whole family through my mother's death. She somehow was able to sense our very different needs and offer the appropriate help in a variety of ways: practical, emotional and spiritual. Annee took away the fear of seeing my mother die, of dealing with funeral directors, of arranging her funeral and of the future.

Cont.

“It was perfect that Annee was able to conduct my mother’s farewell service for us. She had been so involved every step of the way that it was almost as if she was part of our family. She helped us to make the choices that we really wanted, not just what was expected.” AC, January 2011.

Annee offers an independent, compassionate and supportive service to those facing diagnosis with terminal illness or facing bereavement. She offers support and advice over the phone, in a neutral venue or will meet you in your own home to discuss what you need. She enables family members to feel more confident to be with the dying and is often present supporting families when the person dies. She also helps people to develop and write advance care plans (living wills) and provides an advocacy service (ie will accompany the patient or relatives to doctors or medical specialists or to visit residential homes). Importantly, she provides a funeral planning and advice service and if people choose, can hold the funeral as well. Annee believes the secret to the service she provides is continuity of care as she offers her support to the dying person and the family throughout the whole time from diagnosis through to bereavement.

Notes for editors

1. Please find attached picture of Annee Bury in high res and low res versions.
2. Dying Matters was set up and is led by the National Council for Palliative Care (NCPC) to support the implementation of the Department of Health’s End of Life Care Strategy. For more information see www.dyingmatters.org
3. For more information about Dying Matters Awareness Week please visit www.dyingmatters.org/site/resources/awareness-week
4. Annee has a wide range of academic and health care qualifications including MA, BA, RGN, RSCN, PGCE.
5. For more information please contact Annee on 01237 421252 or 07812 179059, or email: anne@landcross.fsworld.co.uk
6. Annee works out of The Bideford Apothecary, 45 Mill Street, Bideford. The Apothecary opened in November 2010 and offers a range of health products and therapies. For more information please see: www.thebidefordapothecary.co.uk
7. Press release issued by Debbie Manners, ND Media, www.ndmedia.co.uk

Ends

Annee Bury, Befriending Dying, The Bideford Apothecary, 45 Mill Street, Bideford, EX39 2JW