



Compassion in End of Life Care

Initiating Discussions about Death & Dying

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A moment for compassion: emerging rhetorics in end-of-life care

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Abstract
This article explores the emerging rhetorics of compassion in end-of-life care. It examines how these rhetorics are used to negotiate the complex and often conflicting demands of medical ethics, patient autonomy, and the need for compassionate care. The authors argue that these rhetorics are not simply descriptive of what is, but also prescriptive of what should be. They are a way of making sense of the challenges of end-of-life care and of finding a way forward that is both ethically sound and compassionate.

Introduction
End-of-life care is a complex and often challenging area of medicine. It involves navigating the delicate balance between medical ethics, patient autonomy, and the need for compassionate care. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on compassion in end-of-life care, with many healthcare providers and policymakers advocating for a more compassionate approach. This article explores the emerging rhetorics of compassion in end-of-life care, examining how these rhetorics are used to negotiate the complex and often conflicting demands of medical ethics, patient autonomy, and the need for compassionate care.

The concept of compassion has long been a central tenet of many religious and philosophical traditions. In the medical context, compassion is often understood as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person. It is a quality that is essential for providing high-quality patient care, particularly in the context of end-of-life care. However, the concept of compassion has become increasingly important in recent years, as healthcare providers and policymakers have recognized the need for a more compassionate approach to end-of-life care. This has led to the emergence of new rhetorics of compassion, which are used to negotiate the complex and often conflicting demands of medical ethics, patient autonomy, and the need for compassionate care.

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What is Compassion?

An emotional response to the suffering of others

but also

compels **ACTION**

THE MID STAFFORDSHIRE
NHS FOUNDATION TRUST
PUBLIC INQUIRY

January 2011 Issue 10

**Report of
the Mid Staffordshire
NHS Foundation Trust
Public Inquiry
Executive summary**

Compassion at end of life



Concept

Attribute

Rallying call

Compassionate Communities



- ✓ Re-empowering communities
- ✓ Reversal of professionalisation of death
- ✓ Social capital approach
- ✓ Death, dying & bereavement experiences normalised

Barriers to 'Free-Flowing' Compassion

1. Sense of privacy and individualism
2. Restrictive legal & regulatory codes
3. Preoccupation with health & safety
4. Suspicion & mistrust of strangers
5. Institutionalised & professionalised healthcare systems



Global South Perspective

‘Reverse innovation’





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