



Press release -THE OMEGA COURSE September 2024

Breaking news

NATIONAL LOTTERY FUNDING AWARD FOR THE OMEGA COURSE

The National Lottery Community Fund has awarded The Omega Course charity £18452 to fund the next 2 years of enabling healthy people to live well and support family friends and neighbours who are sick, dying or bereaved.

Kenilworth, Warwickshire. September 3rd 2024

At a time of countrywide crisis in palliative care, fuelling increasing clamour for assisted dying, we are thrilled to announce that The National Lottery Community Fund has awarded the Kenilworth based Omega Course a 2 year development grant to continue its work helping people gain confidence in living well and supporting others in need.

The Omega Course increases death literacy, dispels taboos and upskills members of the community to be better family, friends and neighbours. The course intent is to return dying to a natural community-led event, attended by confident family, friends, and neighbours who supply basic social functions, and human companionship. It is possible, with the support of professionals, to improve delivery of the needs and wishes of the dying person. Death literacy skills are crucial to the well-being of the dying person, as well as to family and friends because contrary to common belief, only 5% of care in the last year of life is provided by statutory and third sector professionals. It's those we know and love that provide the other 95% of care when someone is dying.

The Omega Course aims to upskill people and so fulfil Ambition 6 of the Ambitions for Palliative and End of Life Care 2020¹: **Each community is prepared to help**

'I live in a community where everybody recognises that we all have a role to play in supporting each other in times of crisis and loss. People are ready, willing and confident to have conversations about living and dying well and to support each other in emotional and practical ways.'

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Death is a 100% event and most people in the UK have been bereaved by the age of 20, but we go about our lives ignoring this inevitability. Being prepared and facing mortality is not ghoulish, morbid or depressing. It is enriching, fulfilling and surprisingly funny at times – or so our attendees of The Omega Course tell us:

“The course sounds quite daunting and even depressing, but there was far more laughter than there were tears. The group gelled quickly and easily, and I am sorry the course has ended.”

“So important to ‘Be prepared’ and then enjoy life!”



“A welcoming and informal course that makes you think: How have I not done this till now?” (24 year old)

Around 250 people will die this coming year in our locality, many will not be prepared. For each death 8 people will be bereaved. Will they find that the person’s papers were in order? Will they find their friends know the right things to say and do? Do you know how to prepare for yourself, as well as support a dying or bereaved person? The Omega Course is designed to help with these issues. We aim to give people a supportive atmosphere so matters of life and death are discussed comfortably.

Academic evaluation showed that after the course people felt more confident talking about dying; are actually having more conversations about it; they are more prepared practically; and less afraid of death.

The course developed with support from local charities. This generosity has allowed us to be truly locally embedded so the National Lottery Community Fund has recognised our community worth and funded growth for the next 2 years. Till now we have had no paid staff, but this grant will fund a part-time administrator as well as the cost of delivering courses.

Compassionate community development is part of public health palliative care, a global venture returning the right for dying people to be cared for, where they wish, by enabled family and community. This can only become successful if we all play our part. Do you know how to? The Omega Course offers a chance to re-skill our community and reacquaint people with the purpose of living well.

About The Omega Course:

The Omega Course is a CIO Charity No: 1183642 registered in Kenilworth providing public health education about death and dying to the healthy lay public and to professional clinicians. The Omega Course takes applications from across Coventry and Warwickshire and collaborates with organisations engaged in developing a Compassionate Community across this area. We have no statutory funding.

Reference

1. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/ambitions-for-palliative-and-end-of-life-care-a-national-framework-for-local-action-2021-2026/> (2020, accessed October 27, 2021).

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