

Abstract

Catherine Hughes PhD

Take Me Home

This documentary follows the journey of one woman from diagnosis with a life-threatening illness to the end of her life. The purpose of the documentary is to highlight the issues that people face on this difficult journey from diagnosis to death and it is also used to raise issues about the challenges we will face in the near future with an ageing population and limited resources within the health system. People who are dying often live and die within the margins of society and are invisible in a world that focuses on well-being and success.

The main character in the documentary, Sally, talks about her invisibility in a world that is carrying on without her, a world in which her dying is not acknowledged. Issues relating to where people die at the end of life are discussed as many people want to go home to die, despite this, many people still die in hospital.

The challenge for palliative care social work is that if we do not know what our job is as social workers, we will soon become an unnecessary and costly add-on. To avoid our jobs being marginalised within the medical system, we need to be clear about what it is that we bring to our roles as social workers and how our clients can benefit from our involvement in their journey to the end of life.

The documentary footage is drawn from a wider ethnographic research project that contributed to the first authors PhD in Social Work and the second authors Masters in Fine Arts.