# Death and Dying: Cultural and Religious Issues

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Chair</td>
<td>Hindu Chaplaincy Volunteer</td>
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<td>Council of Sikh Gurdwaras Birmingham</td>
<td>University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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Overview from Islamic, Sikh and Hindu Perspective

- Death
- Preparation of Death
- Funeral
- Aftercare
- Segregation
- Golden Rules
Islam

- Upon death - process where the spirit is transferred from the physical body to the Hereafter
- Before death - hear recitals from the Qur’an
- Last words - ideally one should die with the Declaration of Faith
Islam

- Expression of grief - expected to keep emotions in control, though crying is allowed
- Post-mortem - forbidden, but under legal obligation family needs explanation in a sensitive manner
- Burial only - cremation not permitted
Islam

- Haste in burial
- Tranporting of body abroad
- White cotton shroud
- No coffin traditionally
- Attendance of women at cemetery - varies within communities
- Mourning period - 3 days
Sikhism

- Upon death - constant cycles of birth and re-birth
- Before death - Hear prayers/readings from the ‘Siri Guru Granth Sahib’
- Last words - ideally one should die with God’s name (Vahe Guru)
Sikhism

- Expression of grief - expected to keep emotions in control, though crying is allowed
- Post-mortem - no restrictions
- Normally cremated - some bury babies
- 5 K’s for baptised (amritdhari) Sikh
Sikhism

- Women attend crematorium/funeral
- Mourning period between 2 to 5 weeks
Hinduism

- Upon death the soul enters another re-incarnation
- Before Death
  - Water from the river Ganges
  - Prayers/readings from religious texts
  - Picture of favourite deity
Hinduism

- Last words - ideally one should die with God’s name (Ram Ram)
- Expression of grief at death is usually open, involves crying
Hinduism

- Post-mortem - no restriction, but clear explanation required
- Always cremate. Under 5’s are buried
- Women attend crematorium
- Mourning period 13 days
Home, Hospital or Hospice

- Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism
  - Prefer to die at home
Touching the Body by a Non-Faith Member

- Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism
  - Usually no objection, but best to check
Non-faith Members at funeral

- Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism
- Attendance permitted
Segregation

- Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism
- Segregation between males and females is traditionally quite important
- Comforting the opposite gender
Golden Rule

- As professionals it is important to be receptive to cultural and religious differences
- Though we can never know it all (!) knowledge of that background may improve communication and enable ability to accommodate needs
Golden Rule

Avoid making assumptions based on a religious or cultural background, as so much diversity exists, and people practice differently
Golden Rule

- Best practice, in all cases, is to consult with the client about their particular needs
- Don’t be afraid to respectfully ASK
Thank you for listening.

Any questions?