



Death and Dying: Cultural and Religious Issues

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Overview from Islamic, Hindu and Sikh 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
- Transporting of body abroad
- White cotton shroud
- No coffin traditionally
- Attendance of women at cemetery - varies within communities
- Mourning period - 3 days



Hinduism

- Upon death the soul enter 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



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



Home, Hospital or Hospice

- Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism
- Prefer to die at home



Touching the Body by a Non-Faith Member

- Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism
 - usually no objection, but best to check



Non-faith Members at funeral

- Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism
 - Attendance permitted



Segregation

- Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism
 - 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
- Best practice, in all cases, is to consult with the client about their particular needs



Golden Rule

- Avoid making assumptions based on a religious or cultural background, though knowledge of that background may improve communication and help enable accommodation



Thank you for listening.

Any questions?