

LifeCircle currently has a highly dedicated staff of ten creating a significant influence in the community. Our fifty trained volunteer mentors support an ever-increasing number of people caring for loved ones at home, impacting on more than 3000 people in communities who are part of the experience of a loved one dying at home. Our twenty-seven trained volunteer phone counsellors receive up to 400 calls a month from people and their families dealing with potentially terminal illness, and have reached many thousands of people involved closely with someone at this critical time of their life. Recently information about our work appeared in a Centrelink newsletter sent to one million seniors, and our phones did not stop ringing with requests for support. We are currently preparing to scale our work, as we have been unable to meet demand. **LifeCircle** has developed a **Life Matters Series**, a lively, interactive and entertaining format, providing information to people preparing for their later years.

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LifeCircle
comfort & guidance

The Story of LifeCircle

LifeCircle evolved from the merger of Life Goes On and Home Hospice, two not-for-profit organisations having a transformational impact on people facing a potentially terminal illness and at the end of life.

Faced with a life-threatening illness, people hope for the best, seeking guidance and inspiration. If the illness becomes terminal or when old age overtakes them, they hope for a dignified end.

A recent Palliative Care Australia survey showed that 74% of people express their wish to die at home. At best, only 16% actually do so. Only 32% stated they had discussed their end of life preferences with their family.

LifeCircle's focus is to support people and those around them through life's journey, to shift people's fear of death and dying and help them experience death as a natural part of life and to make it possible for them to die at home, with dignity, surrounded by their loved ones. Those who live with and care about the person facing end of life can themselves benefit from the experience – thus creating a virtuous circle in which each person's life is enriched.

Life Goes On was established by Joel Nathan OAM eleven years ago. Recovering from two recurrences of a rare form of leukemia, lung cancer and other life-threatening illnesses, Joel experienced firsthand how a serious illness affects the quality of life of the whole family. Through his research and as a professional counsellor with the desire to help as many Australians as possible, Joel founded **HOPELINE®** - the first and only telephone counselling service in the world dedicated solely to providing hope and inspiration to empower people living with and after a potentially terminal illness and at the end of life. Through

LifeCircle Life Goes On continues to support people and their families through and after a life-threatening illness. Its rigorously and professionally trained telephone counsellors have either survived a potentially terminal illness or cared for a loved one at the end of life.

Home Hospice was established nearly thirty years ago by a medical oncologist and a counsellor in response to the many requests they received from families who wanted to honour the wishes of a loved one to die at home. Their passion was to take dying out of hospitals and bring it back into the community making it possible for families and friends to care for loved ones at home where they could die in dignity surrounded by love, intimacy, and comfort.

Through its volunteer mentors, **LifeCircle** supports people caring for loved ones at the end of life, using their own unique wisdom to help them become more resourceful, to engage family, friends and community as support and most importantly, avoid burn-out which often gets in the way of having a loved one dying at home.

LifeCircle mentors are trained, have cared for loved ones themselves and understand what is involved. They offer an independent ear, confidence and resilience to people caring, and stay involved with the families for at least thirteen months after bereavement.

Home Hospice and Life Goes On were introduced by Social Ventures Australia. Both organisations have a similar vision and values. They were keen to extend the impact of their work: to support people in their journey through life-threatening illness, to shift people's fear of death and dying and help people experience death when it does occur as a natural part of life, and to make it possible for people to die at home surrounded by loved ones.

The merger was effected to enable **LifeCircle** to scale up its services nationally and take the model for caring for loved ones through potentially terminal illness and the end of life globally, as currently most Western societies have inadequate systems for dealing with these issues successfully or with compassion. With the ageing population increasing dramatically, intensive care beds costing between \$4,000 - \$10,000 per day and palliative care beds costing between \$1,800 - \$4,800 per day, the work of **LifeCircle** has a strong economic rationale as well as providing immense personal and social benefit.