



**Mercy
Hospice**

Te Korowai Atawhai

***Your life story in your words,
for the people that matter***

Let our skilled Life Story volunteers help
you tell your story.

FREE Life Story Service

Sharing your Life Story might sound daunting or even unnecessary.

But everyone, without exception, has a story worth telling. Everyone deserves an opportunity to feel heard and leave their closing thoughts and messages with the people that matter.

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I was initially a little reluctant and couldn't see what meaning (a Life Story) would carry for anyone else. I now thoroughly recommend this process to anyone, irrespective of whether they are ill or not. The process of narrating is a wonderful journey of reviewing, clarifying, and above all finding meaning in what each of us probably view as a simple and unexciting life.”

Mansur Zwart



Our skilled Life Story volunteers understand how important and personal your story is. They listen deeply, respectfully, and ensure your story appears in your words and in your unique tone of voice.

Our stories deepen our understandings of ourselves and the life we have lived.

A Life Story offers you the opportunity to reflect on the journey you have travelled in the company of trained Life Story volunteer. You have the option to preserve this reflection in your chosen format and decide exactly who has access to it.



A Life Story might include the following areas:

Imagine your life as a photo album. Which important moments and experiences spring to mind?

- Are there stories you would like other people to hear?
- What are some of your more defining moments or turning points?
- What different roles have you performed in life, and what experiences did those roles lead to?
- What are you particularly proud of?
- Are there important things you wish to say, messages you want others to hear?
- What are the lessons you have learned?
- What are your hopes and dreams?
- What would you like people to remember about you?

“

Being referred to this service was the best thing. He (Peter) couldn't stop talking! He found it very therapeutic and as a result had much more acceptance of his illness, in fact he was sorry when the life review process ended. He'd enjoyed the volunteer's company and the process. It is a great service. He was more relaxed and at peace about his illness and more accepting. He always was a great storyteller, and the volunteer was marvellous because he was a bit jumbled, and everything didn't necessarily flow in chronological order, but she helped to make good sense of it. And when the family read it, they learnt an awful lot they hadn't known.

Marion McGregor



Confidentiality

It's your Life Story, so you decide what's included and who has access to it. Life Story content is completely confidential, and any recordings or printed materials are produced only with your approval, as stipulated in the Consent Form, which you sign and date.

A simple three-step process

1. Initial Meeting

This is where you'll meet your Life Story volunteer and begin talking about which topics you'd like to include in your interview. Set up a convenient time for step two.

2. Life Story Interview

At your interview, you will feel deeply heard and hear sensitive, curious questions. Your words will be accurately transcribed and presented in the format of your choice. You will likely experience a profound sense of relief and satisfaction, knowing your story has been preserved.

Your Life Story will be recorded wherever you are receiving care from Mercy Hospice. This could be at home, at 61 College Hill, or elsewhere in the community.

3. Life Story Draft Review

After your recording has been transcribed, you'll have the opportunity to read the draft Life Story and edit the material before it's finalised and presented in your chosen format.

Format Options

Life Stories can be formatted in a variety of ways. These include:

- a printed or digital document containing images,
- an audio recording stored on your preferred media, including an abstract summarising the contents.
- Or you may prefer your Life Story to be in the form of a dictated letter or card. There's even an option to expand your recording into a longer format and produce an eBook. You can choose to do this yourself or with the help of your Life Story volunteer.

Additional illustrative material

It's easy to personalise your Life Story by adding family photographs, artwork, special quotations, poems, songs, letters, diary excerpts, recipes, etc. You can supply these at your interview, and they'll be returned on completion of your Life Story.

Cost

There is no charge for task of compiling your Life Story. However, if you would like this physically printed or transferred onto physical digital media, you or your family will need to cover all production costs, including photocopying or additional copies. There is no charge to share the digital file with you.



Let our skilled volunteers provide peace of mind and satisfaction

Q Is this the same as a biography service?

A No. Unlike biographers, who use their words and writing style to capture people's lives, the goal of a Life Story is to honour and preserve the way you express yourself. This means we edit very lightly, maintain your choice of vocabulary, and the order in which you prefer to relay different topic areas. It's your life story and how you express yourself is unique and personal to you.

Q How long does it take from start to finish?

A This depends on what you'd like from a Life Story. If you want a physical or digital document produced, and your health allows it, as a general guide at least three to four weeks are needed for administration, conducting the interview(s), and transcribing and formatting. If you have limited time, it's still possible to achieve an outcome. Whatever your situation, contact our team leader, Lyn Dancer, and we'll see what can be done in your available time.

Q Who will see the information in my Life Story?

A This is entirely up to you. Some patients prefer to allow access only to nominated people as appears on their signed and dated Consent Form. Others are happy to leave their story with Mercy Hospice, which can be read by other patients, for educational purposes, and distributed more widely.

Q How much information do I need to provide?

A You can provide as much or as little information as you want. In fact, there's no obligation to produce a final document or recording at all. Many patients find immense satisfaction purely from feeling heard by a sensitive and respectful listener.

Q Who approves the content and layout?

A You do! You are the story owner and all aspects of the Life Story require your approval before anything is produced or finalised.

Q What kind of training do your volunteers undergo?

A All our Life Story volunteers complete a full day workshop, where they learn about the philosophy behind the practice model offered at Mercy Hospice, the importance of being a patient-centred listener, and all those practical skills which will help them be effective in their role as Life Story listeners.

Q Can someone who's not a patient at Mercy access this service?

A Unfortunately, we can only offer this service to patients who are current patients with Mercy Hospice.

Q Where does the Life Story interview have to take place?

A Wherever is most convenient for you. Your Life Story will be recorded wherever you are receiving care from Mercy Hospice. This could be at home, at 61 College Hill, or elsewhere in the community.



Experience the joy and peace of knowing your life story will live on

To book an appointment or talk about your situation
call our Volunteer Coordinator on **027 275 9872** or email **volunteer@mh.org.nz**.

Talk to us today about using our FREE Life Story Service



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Mercy Hospice would like to acknowledge Professor Harvey Chochinov of the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, whose work has inspired the Life Story service.