5th International Last Aid Conference Liechtenstein
Innovative Ways in Last Aid for Caring Communities
Liechtenstein 11th-12th September 2026

LAST AID

The contribution of Compassionate Communities and Last Aid Courses to Public Health Palliative Care

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Death is always around in the media...



COVID-19, Bergamo, Italien





War in Ukraine

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What can we all do?

...Practice compassion





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Compassion

- Bringing attention or awareness to recognizing that there is suffering (cognitive)
- Feeling emotionally moved by that suffering (affective)
- Wishing there to be relief from that suffering (intentional)
- A readiness to take action to relieve that suffering (motivational)

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six_habits_of_highly_compassionate_people

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The Last Aid Movement is as colourful as life itself





- Welcomes everybody
- Includes and respects people from different countries, beliefs, religions, ethnicities
- **Aims to empower people to care for each other**
- Wants to make the world a better place…
- Humanity is paramount!

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" End-of-life care is everyone's responsibility "
Allan Kellehear 2013



" Last Aid courses may form the educational basis of compassionate communities "
Georg Bollig et al. 2019

Kellehear, A. QJM 2013 PMID: 24082152 Bollig, G. et al. Healthcare 2019 PMID: 30696095

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Public Health Palliative Care

- Death, dying, loss and care is everyone's responsibility.
- A public health approach to end of life care, views the community as an equal partner in the long and complex task of providing quality healthcare at the end of life.

https://www.phpci.org

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The three literacies

1. Health literacy:

The World Health Organization defines health literacy as "representing the personal knowledge and competencies that accumulate through daily activities, social interactions and across generations. Personal knowledge and competencies are mediated by the organizational structures and availability of resources that enable people to access, understand, appraise, and use information and services in ways that promote and maintain good health and well-being for themselves and those around them."

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The three literacies

2. Death literacy:

is defined as a set of knowledge and skills that enables access to, understanding of, and action on end-of-life and death care options (Noonan et al)

3. Grief literacy:

is defined as the capacity to access, process, and use knowledge regarding the experience of loss (Breen et al.)

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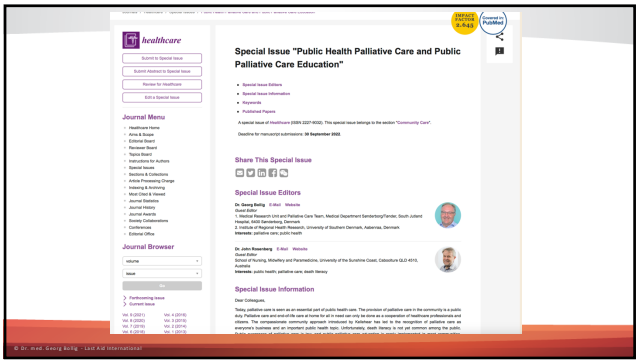
Public Palliative Care Education (PPCE)

- Term introduced by Bollig and Rosenberg
- PPCE includes knowledge about the three literacies



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Important questions:

- How can we promote Public Health Palliative Care?
- How can Compassionate Communities and Last Aid contribute to Public Health Palliative Care?
- Why should the public have knowledge about palliative care and the three literacies?

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Barriers to palliative care provision for all in need

- Lacking death literacy and awareness of palliative care
- Palliative Care is often only associated with care for imminently dying people
- Missing the right time to start palliative care
  - When should early palliative care start?
  - "He/she is not dying/at the end of life."
- Lacking knowledge of local options for palliative care provision
- Fear to talk about death and dying and to participate in palliative care provision

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Need for PPCE

- Lacking awareness of palliative care in the general public
- Palliative care education is recommended by a number of experts/researchers

  Bollig G, Bauer EH. Last Aid Courses as measure for public palliative care education for adults and children: a narrative review. Annals of Palliative Medicine. 2021 jul;10(7):8242-8253.
- Personal experience is the main source of palliative care knowledge

  McIlfatrick S, Noble H, McCorry NK, et al. Exploring public awareness and perceptions of palliative care: A qualitative study. Palliat Med 2014;28:273-280.
- Available information for citizens lies often above the literacy level of the general public

Prabhu AV, Crihalmeanu T, Hansberry DR, et al. Online palliative care and oncology patient education resources through Google: Do they meet national health literacy recommendations? Pract Radiat Oncol 2017;7:306-310.

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Methods and concepts for PPCE

- Death café - in 82 countries worldwide
- Death chat - St. Christophers hospice London
- Psycho-social group education for family carers - Australia
- Last Aid Course - in 24 countries worldwide
- Net-based information - e.g. Canadian Virtual Hospice
- Net-based education using online courses
  - Massive open online course around death and dying (MOOC)
  - Last Aid Course

Bollig G, Bauer EH. Last Aid Courses as measure for public palliative care education for adults and children: a narrative review. Annals of Palliative Medicine. 2021 jul;10(7):8242-8253. https://doi.org/10.21037/apm-21-762

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The Public knowledge approach to improve Palliative care and the Last Aid Course concept



- First & Last Aid belong together!
- My master thesis 2008
- Inspiration from Medic II Seattle

  Best place on earth to survive a cardiac arrest
- First Last Aid Courses 2014 / 2015

  Norway, Germany & Denmark

Bollig G. Palliative Care für alte und demente Menschen lernen und lehren. Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2010

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First Aid and Last Aid belong together



Both First Aid and Last Aid is everyone's responsibility

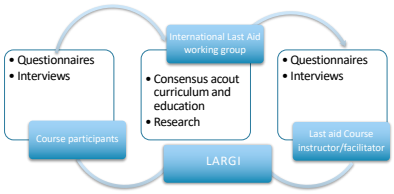






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Last Aid is a learning system!



- LARGI = Last Aid Research Group International

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The search for the wholy grail of humanity









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International Last Aid working group

- Started in 2014 with three countries: Germany, Denmark and Norway
  - Used Scandinavian language in meetings, first slides in Norwegian
- First meeting with English slides 2018 in Frankfurt
- Steering committee: Georg Bollig, Boris Knopf, Marius Ciurlionis
- Members are 1-2 representatives from participating countries
- Responsible for a consensus on the curriculum and slide presentation of the Last Aid Course
- Meeting every other year connected to the Int. Last Aid Conference
- Evtl. online meetings in addition if needed

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Last Aid Research Group International - LARGI

- Founded during the 1. Int. Last Aid Conference in Sønderborg, Denmark 2019
  - LARGE (Last Aid Research Group Europe)
- Chair: Erika Zelko and Georg Bollig
- International cooperation on Last Aid research
  - members are researchers
  - New international Last Aid Course participant questionnaire
- International collaboration including Australia, Canada, Brasil, India
- Organisation of the International Last Aid Conference every two years
  - Today in Liechtenstein



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Does one size fit ALL?



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The different Last Aid Course formats

Last Aid Movement

- Last Aid Course 2015
- Last Aid Course for Kids and Teens 2018
- Online Last Aid Course 2020
- Last Aid professional 2021
- Last Aid in easy language 2022
- Last Aid Diversity 2022
- Last Aid Peer Training 2026
- Last Aid for deaf people

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Lessons learned from the combination of Compassionate Communities and Last Aid Courses

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International Last Aid Multicenter Study

- 408 Last Aid Courses with 6014 participants
- Response rate 91% with 5469 participants
- 88% women, median age 56

99 % recommend the course to others

76 % gave the course the top mark

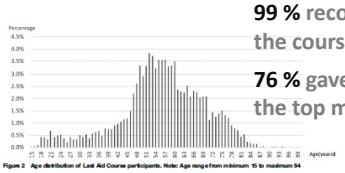


Figure 2 Age distribution of Last Aid Course participants. Note: Age rang e from minimum 15 to maximum 94

Bollig G. et al. Progress in Palliative Care 2021
https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09699260.2021.1887590

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Last Aid Course Online

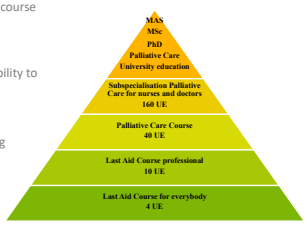
- Apr - May 2020 working group with 34 instructors
- 15 online courses with 174 participants (until Oct 2020)
- Results:
  - Feasible and well accepted...but seen as second best option
  - New participant groups: carers and young people
- Wish to continue online courses!

Bollig G. et a. Healthcare 2021 PMID: PMC7914870

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Last Aid Course for kids and teens

- ✓ 120 of 128 children aged from 9-17 years Last Aid course participants (response rate 94%)
- ✓ The children and teenagers appreciated the possibility to talk about death and dying
- ✓ 85% had previous experience with death and dying
- ✓ 95% found the course useful for everyone
- ✓ 92% would recommend the course to others



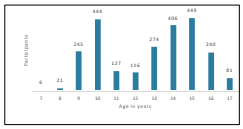
Life-long learning of Last Aid

Bollig G, Pothmann R, Mainzer K, Fiedler H. Kinder und Jugendliche möchten über Tod und Sterben reden: Erfahrungen aus Pilotkursen Letzte Hilfe Kids/Teens für 8- bis 16-Jährige. Zeitschrift fürPalliativmedizin. 2020 sep;21(5):253-259.

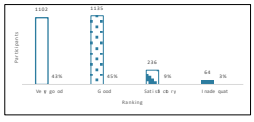
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Last Aid Course for kids and teens

- ✓ 2996 participants, age 7 – 17 years
- ✓ 2534 returned a questionnaire – response rate 85%
- ✓ 84% had experiences with death and dying
- ✓ 91% found the LAC-KT helpful for everyone
- ✓ 87% found the course contents easy to understand



Age distribution of the LAC-KT participants (n = 2409).



Participants' ranking of the LAC-KT (n = 2534)

Bollig G, Gräf K, Gruna H, Drexler D, Pothmann R. "We Want to Talk about Death, Dying and Grief and to Learn about End-of-Life Care"-Lessons Learned from a Multi-Center Mixed-Methods Study on Last Aid Courses for Kids and Teens. Children. 2024 Feb 9;11(2):224.

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"We Want to Talk about Death, Dying and Grief and to Learn about End-of-Life Care"—Lessons Learned from a Multi-Center Mixed-Methods Study on Last Aid Courses for Kids and Teens

84%

of the participants have experienced that someone in their family/circle of friends has died

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Bollig G, Gröf K, Gruta H, Drexler D, Pothmann R. "We Want to Talk about Death, Dying and Grief and to Learn about End-of-Life Care"-Lessons Learned from a Multi-Center Mixed-Methods Study on Last Aid Courses for Kids and Teens. Children. 2024 Feb 9;11(2):224.

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Friedrich Nietzsche

German philosopher

1844 - 1900



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Tips to support grieving people

Consider

- ✓ Listening and being patient
- ✓ Providing practical support
- ✓ Encouraging to accept support
- ✓ Promising only possible things
- ✓ Accepting different ways to grieve
- ✓ Talking about the deceased person
- ✓ That it´s OK to feel helpless

Avoid

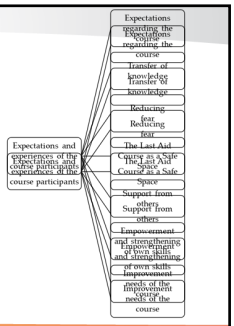
- X Building up time pressure
- X Talking about yourself
- X Making judgements
- X Acting in an intruding manner
- X Starting a sentence with: At least ….
- X Excluding the grieving person

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"I Needed to Know, No Matter What I Do, I Won't Make It Worse"

- Participants feel encouraged to talk open about dying and death
- Empowerment
- Reduction of fear
- Last Aid Course as safe space
- New knowledge



Giehl, C, Chikradze N, Bollig G, Vollmar HV, Otte I. "I Needed to Know, No Matter What I Do, I Won't Make It Worse"—Expectations and Experiences of Last Aid Course Participants in Germany—A Qualitative Pilot Study. *Healthcare 2023, 11(4),592*

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UNIKLINIK KÖLN

CARING COMMUNITY KÖLN

LETZTE HILFE

Gefördert von: Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend

PAULA KUBITSCHECK-VOGEL-STIFTUNG

LAUT – Last Aid in the workplace

for a sensitive approach to serious illness, dying, death and bereavement

8th Public Health Palliative Care International Conference

brücken bauen
bâtir des ponts
building bridges

Karin Ohler & Dr. Georg Bollig

Bern, 24.10.2024

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LAUT paper 1

- 63.1%of respondents reported having been affected within the past five years
- 42.7% seldom or never receiving managerial support
- Informal support from colleagues and managers was more common and often preferred over formal provisions
- Employees valued understanding, empathy, and availability
- Managers emphasized structural measures such as leave policies.
- Barriers, uncertainties, and a **strong need for guidance and training were** frequently reported

Kukla H, Lang T, Joshi M, Ohler K, Esmaili G, Bollig G, et al. (2026) Toward compassionate workplaces: Employers' and employees' perspectives on serious illness, dying, death, and grief: Findings from a nationwide online survey in Germany. PLoS One 21(4): e0345333.

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LAUT paper 2

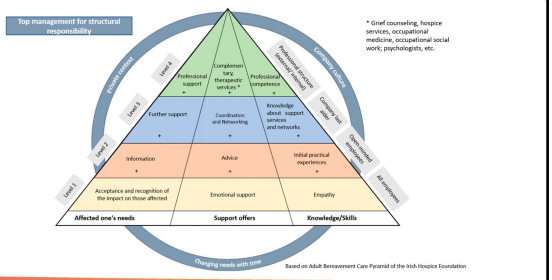
- ✓ 94.5% considered the LAC in the workplace as highly relevant
- ✓ Increased confidence in dealing with the subject matter (96,0%)
- ✓ High willingness to recommend the course to others (98.3%)
- ✓ The qualitative data revealed three interrelated levels:
  1. Personal level: Dealing with those affected, impact of grief on employees;
  2. Company level: Structural factors, managerial support, attitude, and established structures;
  3. Development level: Conceptual input encompassing

Joshi M, Strupp J, Kula H, Esmaili G, Ohler K, Voltz R, Bollig G. Creating compassionate workplaces: A mixed-methods-based integrated framework on last aiders in the workplace. Palliat Care Soc Pract 2026 Aug 14:20:26323524261477765.

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LAUT 2.0 Lastaider in the workplace as part of a compassionate workplace



Joshi M, Strupp J, Kula H, Esmaili G, Ohler K, Voltz R, Bollig G. Creating compassionate workplaces: A mixed-methods-based integrated framework on last aiders in the workplace. Palliat Care Soc Pract 2026 Aug 14:20:26323524261477765.

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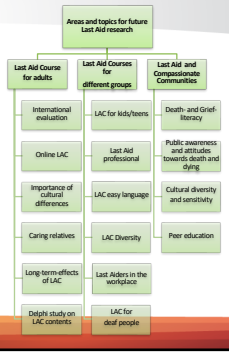
Future Research on last Aid

List of publications - Last Aid

Articles in journals, books and other scientific publications

Last updated 03.09.2026
Total number of publications: 98
PubMed articles with the term "Last Aid": 21

https://www.last-aid.org/publications/



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Ongoing and planned research projects

- Last Aid for Kids in Teens in different countries
- LAUT – Lastaider in the workplace
- IDEM - Empowerment of caring relatives of patients with dementia, University of Bochum
- Informal care at the end-of-life (InSEL), University of Bochum
- Core Competencies in Palliative Care for everyone
- Peer-Education, University of Cologne
- Last Aid for deaf people, University of Linz
- To be continued…

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Take home messsage:

LAST AID

Compassionate Communities and Last Aid Courses can empower people and encourage them:

- **to talk more open about serious illness, dying, death and grief**
- **to participate in palliative care provision in the community**

More info about Last Aid: https://www.last-aid.org
Contact: info@last-aid.org

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