

Ignore it, but it won't go away

BY CHEYENNE CARMACK

Few topics of conversation are quite as uncomfortable to discuss as death. For this reason, death remains to be a taboo issue for many.

Death is an important fact of life. However, due to the implications of discussing it, important decisions and pressing matters go unattended or unsaid.

Upon the passing of family members, say the parents, the children are left with unanswered questions and no one to answer them.

"It's just a touchy subject," said Linda Howard, a local mother of two, who admits that she and her husband have not discussed such matters with their children. "When you start talking about those things kids say, 'That won't happen to me,' and so you push it aside."

Mrs. Howard also added that though they have talked about it for years, she and her husband, Mike, had not yet written up wills. The Howards are part of a large majority.

According to a survey done in 1999 by the National Hospice Foundation, fewer than 25% of Americans 45 years of age or older have put into writing how they would like to be cared for at the end of their lives.

Local attorney John Clontz says that he encourages all of his clients to draw up a written will and inform the executor of their position.

"The transition is smoother if there is a will, and we recommend that our clients do have one," said Clontz.

It does seem important that people, especially parents, make legal, medical, and personal decisions and formal provisions for family members prior to death.

"I think if you're prepared in that way it decreases the overwhelming, 'What am I going to do now,'" said RCHS English teacher, Mrs. Christa Rose.

Mrs. Rose, though she has no children of her own, admits that she would feel unprepared if something happened to her parents.

"I wouldn't even know where to

start," she said.

Another RCHS teacher, Mrs. Connie Riddle, echoes her co-worker's thoughts. However, Mrs.

dren would ultimately be in the custody of the court system.

"Kentucky law prevents and protects minors [those below the age of 18] from handling matters upon the death of a parent," stated Clontz.

At that time, a relative would have to file in a district court for guardianship of the child, and then act as the minor's advisor.

Some parents, though few, have provided for their children in case of the unexpected.

Josh Taylor, a junior at RCHS, feels that his parents have provided adequate information for him and his two siblings.

"Legally, we're completely prepared. The wills were done by a lawyer. We know where the copies are kept. The burial arrangements have all been taken care of, too,"

said Taylor.

Taylor's knowledge serves as a relief to him. "It really is a burden off of me," he said.

Still, the majority of us are not so lucky. Sixteen year old Travis Burton, an RCHS sophomore, has never discussed the details concerning death with his mother.

"I guess we just both know that if something happens it would fall into my grandparents' hands," said Burton.

How well are you prepared for unexpected circumstances? Are your children provided for if something should happen? If they are, are they aware of it?

Pressing issues at the time of death, such as organ donation, burial and funeral arrangement, unpaid debts, and personal wishes should all be taken into consideration and addressed.


In the end, naive attitudes can only be harmful. Is it fair to leave your children unprepared just because it's too uncomfortable to talk about?

It's better to be prepared for the inevitable fact of death, than to be unprepared for the cruel realities of life.



Riddle does have two daughters and a son to consider.

"At this point, they know nothing," said Mrs. Riddle. And though she feels that her own family would step in if something did happen to her and her husband, teacher Ryan Riddle, she realizes that her chil-



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Student behavior may result in falling grades

BY AMY CLARK

In many classrooms you will find a particular student who is always trying to be the class clown.

This is the student who generally sits in the back, laughing and cutting up with their friends while the teacher is talking.

Some may laugh and think it's funny, but others are being deprived of learning what is being taught.

In some cases, a student's mannerisms tend to affect their own grades.

"It seems as if students with poor behavior are also the ones who have bad grades," said science teacher Stephanie Hammack. Other teachers support this opinion.

"People that are disruptive are usually not paying attention or getting the information they need," said math teacher Dawn Quigley.

French teacher Angie Hendrickson agrees that if students are not attentive they usu-

ally don't know what is going on.

Mr. Ryan Riddle, anatomy and physiology teacher, believes that if students are hyperactive or hypoactive it affects their grades.

"If they are asleep (hypo), they aren't doing the assignment. If they have intense energy (hyper), they are probably not paying attention because they can't sit still," he said.

Some students tend to agree with the teachers.

"People who goof off in class are not serious about their education. They'll regret it when they can't find a good job," said senior Tabitha Durham.

Although some student behavior may cause conflict, teachers are usually good at handling the situation before it becomes a problem. However, it will always remain solely the student's choice on how it affects their grades.

"Jare Doe" who sits in the back spitting spit wads all year may also have an F for a grade.