

ATI: Video Case Study Palliative and Hospice Care

Julianna Flores

Lakeview College of Nursing

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**How can the nurse ensure that a client receiving palliative/hospice care is kept comfortable? What are some ways that the nurse could provide for the psychosocial and spiritual comfort of the client?**

Palliative/hospice nurses improve patient comfort by addressing physical, psychosocial, and spiritual needs (Eliopoulos, 2021). Nurses manage physical symptoms such as pain, respiratory distress, constipation, nausea, and malnutrition by performing regular assessments, administering medications, educating patients, and using nonpharmacological interventions (Eliopoulos, 2021). Conversating with patients, arranging therapy, encouraging activities, and involving the family helps meet patients' psychosocial needs (Eliopoulos, 2021). Nurses must ask patients about their spiritual needs and fulfill them by helping them read religious texts and requesting visits from spiritual leaders (Eliopoulos, 2021). Using a holistic approach allows nurses to improve the quality of life of palliative/hospice patients (Eliopoulos, 2021).

**How can the nurse provide support for the family/loved ones of the dying client?**

Nurses play a vital role in helping families with a dying loved one cope with the process. They assess the family's needs, keep them informed on the patient's condition, prepare them for what is to come, and answer their questions. They provide emotional and spiritual support to the family by encouraging them to discuss their feelings, comforting them, arranging pastoral care, sitting with the patient if the family is unavailable, and providing them with information on support groups and grief counseling (Eliopoulos, 2021). The nurse continues to support the family following the death of their loved one. The nurse arranges for a traveling nurse, social worker, or spiritual leader to check in on the family (Eliopoulos, 2021). These actions by the

nurse assist the family during the dying process and improve their emotional well-being following the passage of their loved one (Eliopoulos, 2021).

**What feelings occurred when interacting with a person with a life-limiting illness?**

This student's only experience with a person with an incurable illness was with her grandmother, who had esophageal cancer. The tumor location impaired her eating ability, resulting in significant weight loss, no energy, and enteral nutrition. She passed during surgery to remove the mass. Witnessing her suffering and dealing with her loss was the most challenging thing this student has experienced. This student felt sadness, hopelessness, anger, fear, and loneliness. It took several years for this student to cope with her death.

**Were the feelings or emotions adequately handled?**

This student was a child when her grandmother fell ill and passed. Therefore, she did not handle her emotions appropriately. She isolated herself and developed anger that resulted in fights with her parents. She questioned her religious beliefs and did not discuss her feelings with her parents or friends. However, as she matured, she communicated her feelings and moved through the stages of grief. Today, the student is at peace with her grandmother's passing.

**Was there adequate communication with the ill person?**

There was inadequate communication between the student and her grandmother. They avoided talking about the illness because it made the other person upset. They pretended it was just another ordinary day and continued to make plans. This student's grandmother did not inform her about the seriousness of the illness because of her age. The lack of communication resulted in the student being blind-sided by her grandmother's sudden passing.

**How did the person with the life-limiting illness feel during their interactions?**

This student's grandmother did her best to put on a brave face when she was with her. It was hard to tell how she was doing emotionally, but physically, she was in severe pain and exhausted. She mustered up the energy to take her grandkids to the park, cook dinners, and get together for holidays, which seemed to bring her joy.

**Could the interactions have been improved in any way? How?**

This student wishes that she could go back and change the interactions between her and her grandmother. She should have talked to her grandmother about the illness and asked her how she was doing. She should have checked in on her more and comforted her.

References

Eliopoulous, C. (2021). *Gerontological nursing* (10th ed.) Wolters Kluwer.