

ATI: Video Case Study Palliative and Hospice Care

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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?

A nurse can ensure comfortable care for a client receiving palliative/hospice care in several ways. Nonpharmacological options for comfort include using supplemental oxygen, massage therapy, and repositioning the client. Pharmacological options include using morphine to ease pain and furosemide to treat fluid volume overload. The nurse could also include pastoral care in the plan of care to treat the client's spiritual needs. The psychosocial needs of the client could consist of frequent visits from the family.

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

Care for the family of the dying client is just as important as care for the client. Nurses should expect to address what the client is currently experiencing with the family and educate what/why it is occurring. The family may also have numerous questions, so the nurse should plan to answer the questions honestly and respectfully. Lastly, this is a difficult time for the family, so the nurse should use provide active listening and emotional support for the family.

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

This student nurse had a grandmother pass while they were in middle school. Their grandmother was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was placed in hospice. This student nurse recalls seeing their grandmother deteriorate in health and eventually could not visit her because they wanted to remember their grandmother in her healthy state. This student nurse recalls their grandmother being grateful for every moment and reflecting on her experiences. This student nurse's grandmother reminded them not to take life for granted and to make the most of life.

Were the feelings or emotions adequately handled?

This student nurse was able to handle their emotions during the beginning of their grandmother being placed in hospice care. As their grandmother's health deteriorated, this student nurse chose not to see their grandmother because of her state of health. Looking back on the situation, this student nurse understands why they did not want to see their grandmother but now wishes they did visit their grandmother as her health continued deteriorating.

Was there adequate communication with the ill person?

This student nurse's father visited his mother in hospice care every day he could. This student nurse recalls their father saying that his mother was comfortable during her last few days and that the nurse was exceptional in their care and communication with the family. This student nurse's father began to visit more frequently due to the nurse informing him that his mother would likely pass away in the next few days.

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

This student nurse cannot directly speak for their grandmother, but from what their father said, their grandmother appreciated the care she received and the frequent visits from family members. This student nurse recalls their grandmother being in pain frequently, and the nurse was able to manage that pain with medication. Interactions with a client who has a life-limiting illness and is in hospice care should focus on improving the quality of their life, from managing pain to providing a conversation.

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

This student nurse does not believe there was any need for improvement in the interactions. This student nurse believes the nurse who oversaw their grandmother's care did a phenomenal job and performed each aspect of their job the best they could.