

## **Client Comfort and End of Life Care Reflection**

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## **Client Comfort and End-of-Life Care Reflection**

### **What was learned from this scenario?**

The ATI scenario focused on a client choosing to begin comfort care while being of sound mind and body while experiencing a hospitalization for advanced COPD and lung cancer. The client states she is tired and can no longer do this and asks the nurse to explain hospice care to her daughters. The client's two daughters do not agree with each other concerning their mother's choice to stop fighting her illnesses and choose to begin palliative care to find comfort from the pain she has experienced throughout her illness that is worsening. One daughter wants to respect her mother's wishes and wants her to be comfortable and free of pain. The client's other daughter wants her mother to keep fighting because she denies her mother's prognosis and believes her mother can beat her illnesses.

Family situations should be by the nurse with careful consideration of the amount of high emotion surrounding a client's prognosis or family dynamics that are unknown to the nursing staff. Nursing staff must be respectful of everyone's feelings. Staff may need to allow clients and their families time to discuss the situation, which may work in some situations, and others may require social services staff to become involved. The most important aspect to remember is that even though we are there to support the client's family, the focus should always be caring for the client first and supporting their healthcare decisions and needs. Nursing staff must advocate for their clients during critical situations, provide proper care, and respect the client's request within the nurse's scope of practice.

**Identify the most significant takeaways.**

**Explain the factors that influenced this decision.**

The biggest takeaway was that the nurse in the scenario respected the client and her family and provided respectful clear communication to everyone. Even when the children in the scenario were playing with healthcare items needed for their grandmother's care and being louder than needed, the nurse intervened, respectfully requested the item, and redirected the children. During family disagreements between the two daughters or the daughter and the aunt, the nurse waited until they finished their discussion and provided positive redirection. The nurse asked the right questions to present herself as understanding and not judgmental while allowing the family members to come to express their feelings about the situation and understand each other rather than escalating the situation with forceful communication tactics that could end negatively. Giving a chance to express their feelings may allow the client's family to find a resolution focusing on their loved ones' wants and needs.

**What are some of the main problems or critical issues in the scenario?**

The client's daughter's disagreements with each other concerning their mother's choice to begin palliative care rather than to continue fighting her illness is the main problem at the beginning of the scenario.

During the client's visit with her sister, the request for a chaplain by the client's sister is quickly refused by one of the daughters. The daughter's concern is that the client would not want to be visited by the chaplain because she has not attended church since the death of her husband. The nurse made the right choice to ask to discuss this situation further because the discussion should involve the client and discuss if she prefers to speak with the chaplain or not.

The client's grandchildren were playing with healthcare items needed for their grandmother's care and being louder than needed. The nurse intervened and respectfully

requested the item and redirected the children. Once the nurse finished, she redirected her focus to her client, who commented that she was tired and wanted to rest. The nurse respectfully spoke with the daughter, explaining that her mother wanted to rest, which prompted the family to exit the room to allow her to rest. The nurse's response during this portion of the scenario provided respect for the family and the client to maintain a healthy situation and conversation between the client, family, and nurse.

The client says she is hurting, so one daughter calls the nurse requesting pain medication while the other daughter says her mother does not want pain medication. After the nurse speaks with both daughters about their concerns, they decide that since their mother can request medication from the nurse, it would be best to ask her if she would like to take medication for the pain she is experiencing.

The nurse decided it would be in everyone's best interest to inform the nursing director and the provider of the day's events. The nurse requests both the nursing director and the provider to intervene to explain and discuss concerns surrounding their mother's situation and the care provided. The nurse's choice to involve administrative staff is the correct choice when in a problematic but sensitive situation.

### **What were some of the challenging decisions the nurse needed to make?**

#### **1. Describe the rationale behind these decisions.**

The nurse faced multiple challenging decisions that she handled professionally and respectfully providing information, understanding, and respectful responses to the client and her family members while also focusing on the client's needs and care plan. When the nurse felt that she needed administration to be intervene to assist the family in maintaining a proper

understanding of the client's healthcare situation and needs, the nurse followed protocol and addressed her concerns with the nursing director and the client's provider to make them aware of the situation and to ask them to address the family.

The challenging situations during the scenario included disagreements between the client's daughters concerning the choice to pursue palliative care, disagreements between one of the client's daughters and the client's sister concerning consulting the chaplain, the client's grandchildren playing loudly with healthcare items interfering with the clients rest, or the daughters disagreeing with each other about their mothers choice to take or not to take medication for any pain that she is experiencing.

### **What factors influenced nursing decisions and responses during the scenario?**

**a. Explain the response.**

**b. How will a nurse respond if this scenario is presented again in the future?**

Nursing decisions during the scenario were each influenced by the nurse's ability to professionally observe each situation and think about the best response before engaging in conversations with the client or her family members. The nurse first considered the client's state of health and the emotions her client and her family members may be experiencing. The nurse's ability to process the conversation and situation to meet the needs of her client best while not offending family members in the process allowed the nurse to create a healthy environment that allowed everyone involved to talk about situations, process the situation, respond accordingly, and leave the situation with a better understanding on a positive note.

The nurse will most likely respond similarly if the situation allows. Providing conversations, understanding, and solutions to differences is the correct way to handle

challenging situations and decisions positively. Furthermore, when the nursing staff has exhausted all options bringing in a director or provider to assist is the correct choice.

**Have similar situations been experienced in current clinical rotations?**

- a. How did nursing or others respond to the situation? Please explain.**
- b. Describe successful communication strategies used or experienced in the clinical setting.**

Working in a nursing home setting, I have experienced situations much like this scenario, and providing care for the client is the focus of the entire nursing staff. Family members disagreeing on care options, care provided by staff, or negative family dynamics can cause a very uncomfortable situation for the client, the client's family, other clients within the facility, and the staff. The nursing staff responded professionally, focusing on the client's preferred methods of care, and when engaging with the family, the staff was respectful and ensured positive interactions. If a situation escalates, the nursing staff contacts the available administration, including the supervising nurse, director of nursing, or administrator. Positive interactions are essential to successful communication strategies during situations driven by multiple emotions. It assists in keeping the level of respect and understanding between staff, clients, and family members at an acceptable level.

**Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of families discussing treatment options, including end-of-life decisions, before a loved one becomes ill or early in a terminal illness.**

The advantages of having families discuss their preferred treatment options and putting a plan in place allow everyone involved to be on the same page regarding the client's wishes

concerning their treatment options when a situation arises. Discussing options and client wishes ahead of time assists family members in avoiding disagreements about what their loved one would choose medically. Family members can focus on the time they have with their loved ones rather than making decisions, and this eliminates family members from making decisions concerning their loved one's care when they are not comfortable with doing so. Nursing staff benefits when clients make their decisions verbally or legally clear because they are informed upfront and can abide by the client's wishes directly.

Sadly, the disadvantages are that some family members do not abide by or consider the family member's wishes and push back during conversations about future treatment options to ensure their wants or needs selfishly. Not discussing treatment options prior to illness can lead to legal action that interferes with the client's decisions for their care and can also lead to unfavorable situations within the family and healthcare settings. Nursing staff should involve administration if a communication situation becomes unsuccessful and providing care for the client becomes challenging.