

Palliative and Hospice Care Reflection

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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?

The nurse will work with the client and their family to make sure all their wishes and needs are met. The nurse can do this by administering medication as prescribed, oxygen therapy, and finding adequate resources and education for the family. Comfort is the main priority when it comes to palliative/hospice care because curative measures are no longer available. Nurse can meet psychosocial and spiritual comfort by working with the spiritual team the client and their family desire. The nurse could also provide resources such as case management or social work to help with finances or home health, volunteers to aid with household chores or pet therapy, and any other psychosocial wishes the client and family ask for.

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

The nurse can provide support for the family of the dying client by being their advocate for the client's plan of care. The nurse can also provide therapeutic communication and offer self to the family. The nurse can work with the family to determine their wishes for end of life care by offering resources for funeral homes or crematoriums, home healthcare, volunteers to help with household care such as meals or cleaning, and support groups available within the community.

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

Some feelings that occur when interacting with a person who has a life-shortening illness are empathy, hopelessness, and sadness. Clients who are diagnosed with a life-threatening illness may have already accepted their fate and have come to terms with their diagnosis. However, this

may not always be the case. As a nurse, it is hard to watch a client struggle with their diagnosis because there is nothing we could do to cure them. The nurse must offer strength and support for the client and ensure their treatment will be focused on comfort and meeting their needs.

Were the feelings or emotions adequately handled?

Nurses are exposed to death, dying, and chronic illnesses often. Some may forget that each client will process their diagnosis differently and the emotional support we offer will depend on the client. I have personally seen some nurses handle these emotions well and are able to support the client and their family. I have also seen some nurses lack empathy for the situation. I feel as though I have handled my emotions appropriately by demonstrating strength and support.

Was there adequate communication with the ill person?

If the ill person is still able to communicate their wishes, I have witnessed nurses demonstrate strong communication with them ensuring they are comfortable and have the support they need. I have also seen a situation where the client was unable to speak for themselves and when this occurred, the nurse communicated with the family adequately.

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

The patient with the life-shortening illness often feels tired, anxious, depressed, or some may even feel relief. The situation depends on where the client is at in their stage of grief. The client often feels relief when they have a nurse who demonstrates strength and empathy because they feel like they are well taken care of. The nurse should analyze the client's nonverbal communication to determine how they are feeling about their care and situation.

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

The interaction could be improved by ensuring the nurse offers self and makes time to listen to the client and their family. Nurses often have multiple patients and feel the need to rush interactions so they can move on to their next task. For a dying client or one who is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, the nurse should prepare to spend more time with them without making the interactions feel rushed.