

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 plays an extremely crucial role in ensuring the comfort of patients who are receiving palliative/hospice care. The main approach is to manage pain and symptoms through pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic methods. Nurses should assess pain regularly using the appropriate pain scale such as 0-10 numeric scale, Wong-Bakers faces, Visual analogue scale, and verbal pain scale along with flexibility adjust medications accordingly, to ensure that the patient is as comfortable as possible without over sedation. Environmental factors can also really affect the patient like positioning, temperature and lighting should be adjusted for better comfort. For example, keeping the rooms quiet, comfortable bedding and maintaining a comfortable room temperature can help alleviate discomfort. Nurses should also consider the patients preferences for activities and routines. This allows them to continue to feel independence while going through this part of life. These strategies contribute significantly to maintain comfort for the patients in palliative/hospice care.

The nurse can address the psychosocial and spiritual comfort of the patient by creating an environment of consistent communication and empathetic listening. It is critical for the nurse to understand and empathize with the patients emotional and spiritual needs so that there is a safe place so that they can express their thoughts, fears and desires. This can be done by presenting and offering reassurance while also respecting the patients' beliefs and wishes. Encouraging the involvement of a pastor or spiritual advisor which may help meet the patients' spiritual needs,

especially if they are struggling with issues related to faith and personal meaning.

Psychosocially, the nurse can support the patient by providing comfort through just being there for the patient and ensuring they feel valued and understood. This holistic approach helps the patients emotional and spiritual well-being during the end-of-life process.

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

Supporting the family and loved ones of a dying patient involved both practical and emotional care. The nurse can educate the family about the stages of dying, helping them understand what to expect and how they can assist their loved one in a comforting and meaningful way. The nurse can offer emotional support, by actively listening to the family's concerns and providing reassurance to them. Encouraging the family to express their feelings and offering resources such as grief counselors can also be very beneficial. Additionally having open discussions about end-of-life preferences, including the patients living will, ensures the family is prepared and the patient's wishes are respected. The nurse can also help with practical tasks, such as arranging for support services, ensuring that family members feel empowered and supported throughout the process of their loved one's death.

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

When interacting with a person with a life-limiting illness, a wide range of emotions can arise including empathy, sadness and even fear. The realization that the person is nearing the end of their life can evoke a deep sense of sorrow and vulnerability. As a nurse, it can be difficult to witness the physical decline of a patient, especially when they are facing pain and suffering. However, there may also be moments of connection and fulfillment, knowing that you are

providing comfort and care in the patient's final hours. It is essential to manage one's emotional response professionally, maintaining a compassionate presence while ensuring that the patient's needs are met. This emotional balance allows the nurse to remain effective in providing care while also acknowledging the emotional complexities of the situation.

Were the feelings or emotions adequately handled?

It is essential for both the nurse and the patient to handle emotions in a supportive and healthy way. In situations involving life-threatening illness, it is important for the nurse to remain empathetic but not overly emotional, providing reassurance to the patient while also maintaining a professional boundary. If emotions become overwhelming, the nurse could seek support from a supervisor, colleague, or counselor. The emotional responses experienced during interactions with patients facing life-threatening illness were handled in a way that respected both the patients' needs and personal boundaries. The feeling of sadness and empathy were recognized but not allowed to overstep the quality of care provided. Nurses should continuously engage in self-care and seek support to ensure they can manage their emotions effectively while providing excellent care.

Was there adequate communication with the ill person?

Adequate communication with a person who has a life-limiting illness is crucial to ensuring their comfort and dignity. Communication should be open, clear, and respectful, allowing the patient to express their needs, desires and concerns. In many cases, the patients may have trouble in communicating due to physical limitations or fatigue, so the nurse should be attentive to non-verbal cues and be patient in allowing the patient time to respond. By active

listening and validating the patient's feelings, these play an essential role in the communication process. As it helps the patient feel heard and respected. If the patient has trouble expressing themselves verbally, the nurse can use alternative methods such as writing, using a communication board or involving family member who can help articulate the patients' thoughts. Clear communication helps maintain trust and ensures that the patient's preferences are prioritized.

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

The person with a life-limiting illness may have felt a mix of emotions during their interactions, including fear, sadness, and possibly relief. Many individuals facing terminal illness may experience anxiety about the unknown and worry about their physical decline or the impact on their loved ones. However, they may also feel comforted by the nurse's presence, especially if the nurse is compassionate and listens attentively to their concerns. In some cases, the patient may experience a sense of peace if their spiritual or emotional needs are addressed and if they feel that their wishes are being honored. The nurse's ability to be present and offer reassurance can significantly influence how the patient feels during their interactions, contributing to their overall sense of comfort.

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

The interactions with the patient and their family can always be improved through continued open communication and active listening. One way to improve interaction would be to further involve the family in the care planning and discussions about the patient's preferences. Additionally, the nurse should take more time to ensure that the patient can express their

thoughts and feelings without feeling rushed. Nurses can also offer additional support services such as grief counseling or spiritual care might also improve the experience for both patient and their family. By remaining present, attentive, and open to feedback, the nurse can create an even more supportive and compassionate environment for both the patient and their loved ones.