

Client Comfort and End-of-Life Care Reflection

Benjamin Ruettiger

Lakeview College of Nursing

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

I learned that end-of-life care is a regular part of the nursing profession, and there are communication techniques that can be utilized to ensure proper care coordination. Building a nursing staff-older-person relationship is the most important foundation for engaging in a person-centered end-of-life communication process (Peerboom et al., 2023).

### **Identify the biggest takeaways.**

#### **a) Explain the factors that influenced this decision.**

Some factors that influence the nursing process are the family dynamic and the needs of the dying patient. It is essential to take a holistic approach to communication in regard to end-of-life care. Knowing each other enables nursing staff to have a sense of older people's readiness, determine the right timing to initiate an end-of-life conversation, identify specific needs, and accurately apply (non-)verbal observation skills (Peerboom et al., 2023).

### **What are some of the main problems or key issues expressed in the scenario?**

Some key issues expressed in the scenario include the family's understanding of the dying process, the capacity of the patient during this time, and ensuring the best nursing practice is utilized in the scenario. Answering the family's questions clearly and concisely is essential for providing proper education and understanding of the dying process, and using a nonjudgmental tone during the interaction ensures respect is given to those going through a difficult time.

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

#### **a) Describe the rationale behind these decisions.**

The nurse had to ensure that grief can present differently to different people. Understanding that not everyone involved has the same knowledge or understanding of end-of-life care is key. Keeping the patient at the center of all conversations and care decisions is the best way to prevent any disharmony or negative feelings for both the patient and their family.

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

- a) **Explain the response.**
- b) **How will a nurse respond if this scenario presents again in the future?**

The response was concise and direct, especially regarding the interaction with the patient's daughter. Explaining what hospice is, and how it can make their mother the most comfortable can help educate the family on the best way for their mother to transition into comfort care.

If this scenario arises in the future, the nurse should understand that resources are available at the hospital to answer some of the more difficult questions regarding end-of-life care. Paging the hospice team to come and discuss with the patient and family could better equip them with knowledge and comfort with the decisions being made.

**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.**

I personally have not experienced this in my clinical rotations, but have experienced it in my work experience. The nursing staff I worked with was very knowledgeable of the dying process and were my go-to's when I had questions or the family had questions.

Some successful communication strategies I have experienced in the clinical setting include maintaining eye contact where appropriate, giving direct and respectful answers to questions, and providing resources to those who need them when I may not be able to answer some of their questions or concerns.

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

The advantage is that the family is involved in their loved one's care. Most of the time, it is important to include those that the patient wants in their care coordination, so involving them in critical end-of-life decision-making can help both the patient and family cope.

Some disadvantages include miscommunications, differing opinions, and family dynamics. I have seen situations where the family does not agree on confident decision-making, and this can create disharmony within the family, which directly affects the patient going through their terminal illness. Miscommunication between staff and patient/family can also create confusion about the process, so clear and concise communication is necessary when navigating those discussions.

## References

Peerboom, F. B. A. L., Friesen-Storms, J. H. H. M., Coenegracht, B. J. E. G., Pieters, S., van der Steen, J. T., Janssen, D. J. A., & Meijers, J. M. M. (2023). Fundamentals of end-of-life communication as part of advance care planning from the perspective of nursing staff, older people, and family caregivers: a scoping review. *BMC nursing*, 22(1), 363. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-023-01523-2>