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?

To establish that the patient or client is receiving the best palliative/hospice care, nurses should implement patient-centered care, teamwork, safety, etc. which are all the crucial aspects in a hospice setting. They should focus on what the patient needs, such as pain medications. Although physical comfort is important, there are also psychosocial and spiritual aspects that needs to be taken care of. You would need to assess the patient or client in detail to see if anything can reduce any kind of stress they might be having. It is important to listen to them and hear what they want to say or do with their care. It can be hard to follow their wishes at times, but if that is what they want, then it is our job to listen. Having the family involved and updated is also very important, as they are potentially losing their loved ones. There are so many aspects of palliative care that we may not realize. As nurses, we should be able to provide the care that we are comfortable with.

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

Nurses have an important role when it comes to supporting a family and helping them after losing a loved one. Giving emotional support, communicating, and providing resources they can utilize are important as well (QSEN, 2022). Many people experience stress, sadness, anxiety, depression, etc., and as nurses, we can somewhat alleviate that with simple things such as listening and providing them with any resources. Constantly communicating and checking up on the family can help and let them know that every staff member is here for them. It can be a lot

for them to process, so we also must give them time. It is really comforting to hear when the nurses are there to guide them.

Competencies | QSEN. (2022). QSEN. https://www.qsen.org/competencies

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

Having a conversation with someone who knows they have a life-limiting illness can be complicated. There are many emotions that go through a person when they hear that. There may be feelings like shock, helplessness, disbelief, etc. When one is feeling so many emotions, it is good to take a moment and gather oneself together. It can be difficult at times as healthcare providers. Listening well and having the right body language and tone of voice can ease the patient that they are in good hands (Marie Curie, 2021).

Talking about dying to someone with a terminal illness. (2021). Marie Curie. https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/professionals/palliative-care-knowledge-zone/talking-about-dying

Were the feelings or emotions adequately handled?

When taking care of someone who has limited time, handling emotions and feelings is very important. You could feel fear, anxiety, the emptiness of how you aren't able to do anything for them, etc., there are so many more emotions and feelings that can be felt from one person. Recognizing those feelings and emotions can really help when taking care of patients in

palliative care settings (McLaren, 2025). If they are suppressed, then it is only going to make it harder on yourself. Sometimes letting go is the way.

McLaren, K., & McLaren, K. (2025, May 29). *Feelings vs. Emotions: What's the difference? | Karla McLaren*. Karla McLaren. https://karlamclaren.com/is-it-a-feeling-or-is-it-an-emotion-revisited/

Was there adequate communication with the ill person?

Good communication can often be hard at times, because everyone understands a little differently. Sometimes you must work with one to reach the same conclusion. With communication, it is said that it improves the quality of care. It gives the genuine connection between nurses and patients and family members, builds trust, respects culture, etc. (Connections, 2024). All these aspects can improve patient-centered care. It is vital for the healthcare team to do this for the patient to have comfortable care.

Connections, B. (2024, December 6). *Improving Communication for Patients with Serious Illness*. Bass Connections. https://bassconnections.duke.edu/improving-communication-patients-serious-illness/

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

Many mixed emotions can come with interacting with a patient with a life-limiting illness. There are vulnerability, gratitude, comfort, etc. that may be felt a little differently depending on the person who is receiving the care. It is already hard on them that they are going

through so much pain. It is important not to take their anger personally, have a calm tone, and be as gentle as possible (Hospice, 2021). You will not benefit from getting angry at them or being frustrated with them. They should be heard and understood. Taking time with the patient is important as well, because miscommunication can happen so easily.

Hospice, C., & Hospice, C. (2021b, May 24). End-of-Life Personality Changes: Dealing with Anger Before Death - Crown Hospice | Cape Girardeau Palliative Care. *Crown Hospice | Cape Girardeau Palliative Care* -. https://crownhospice.net/blog/end-of-life-personality-changes-dealing-with-anger-before-death/

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

Interactions can always be improved. Showing empathy and letting them know that you are there for them can be the starting point. Nurses showing above and beyond with their care can significantly improve the interactions with the patient (Quigley, 2020). Using the QSEN components, patient-centered care, teamwork, skill, and attitudes can also always be improved in interactions (QSEN, 2022). It can be a rough start at times to build trust between people who don’t know each other; however, just a simple conversation that can help them forget about their pain can help them get through their day. Just having compassion, communication, skills, and knowledge can make a big difference.

Competencies | QSEN. (2022). QSEN. https://www.qsen.org/competencies

Quigley, D. D., & McCleskey, S. G. (2020). Improving care experiences for patients and caregivers at End of Life: A Systematic review. *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine®*, *38*(1), 84–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049909120931468