

# ELNEC Undergraduate and New Graduate

## Module 1: Introduction to Palliative Care Nursing (1 hour)

### Objective/Purpose:

The Introduction to Palliative Care Nursing module serves as a foundation for this series. As central members of the interprofessional team, nurses must be prepared to provide competent and holistic care to persons with serious illnesses and their families (chosen and of origin). Primary palliative nursing care (PPNC) builds on your foundational nursing education and is expected of all nurses regardless of practice setting; it is care provided by the generalist nurse, not the specialist. As a nurse, you will become aware of gaps in current healthcare delivery systems, particularly when caring for patients with serious illnesses and their families. There are many factors that influence the quality of care provided, including social, access, economic, and environmental. It is vital that you collaborate with members of the interprofessional team to honor patients' goals of care and to provide palliative care across the continuum of illness for all seriously ill patients and their families. This module provides an overview of palliative care and your unique and important role. The goal of this module is to provide undergraduate and new graduate nurses with an overview of palliative care.

### Outline

#### Introduction

#### Overview of Palliative Care

- The Facts About Serious Illness
- More About Serious Illness
- National Health Expenditure
- What Is Palliative Care?
- Palliative Care Testimonial
- Philosophy and Delivery
- Current Status of Palliative Care Programs
- Palliative Care Team Testimonial
- Palliative Care and the Nurse
- The Nurse's Role
- Quality-of-Life Model
- Case Study
- Continuum of Care
- Pediatric Palliative Care Testimonial
- Practice
- What Is Hospice?
- Hospice Eligibility Criteria
- The Hospice Team
- Considering Hospice Candidacy
- Differences Between Hospice and Palliative Care
- Disease and Dying Trajectories
- Barriers and Inequities in Hospice and Palliative Care Services

Improving Palliative Care  
Palliative Nursing Practice  
Review

Conclusion

Module Summary

## **Module 2: Communication in Palliative Care (1.25 hours)**

### Objective/Purpose:

Communication is the foundation of building a relationship with patients/clients and families and central to palliative nursing care. Your role is critical in all healthcare situations but is of special significance in the care of those with serious illness and who may be approaching the end of life. Your ability to engage in therapeutic communication, participate in eliciting goals of care, and guide the patient and family along the illness continuum is vital on the healthcare team. Communication is a skill that develops over time, through experience and education. You have a unique opportunity to provide compassionate, holistic, and quality care with good communication skills. “Communication is defined as an exchange of information, thoughts, and feelings and encompasses various ways people interact, including verbal, written, behavioral, body language, touch, and emotion” (AACN, 2021, p. 12). Furthermore, effective communication includes intentionality, mutuality, trust, and presence. The goal of this course is to provide undergraduate and new graduate nurses with knowledge of communication principles for palliative care.

### Outline:

#### Introduction

#### Communication Considerations and Context

- The Nurse's Role
- Barriers to Communication
- Culture and Identity Considerations in Communication
- Culturally Sensitive Communication
- Communication with Family
- Starting a Conversation with Family Caregivers
- Advance Care Planning Conversations
- Out-of-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate Order
- Review
- Summary

#### Communication Techniques

- Therapeutic Communication
- Empathy
- Nonverbal Communication
- Listening
- Verbal Communication
- Attentive and Mindful Listening
- Therapeutic Presence
- Listening and Presence in Action
- Reflections
- Practice #1
- Giving "The Words"
- Interviewing Patients
- Ask-Tell-Ask

Ask-Tell-Ask in Action  
Reflections  
Practice #2  
Communication Techniques  
I'm Sorry vs. I Wish  
There Is Always Hope  
Facilitating End-of-Life Discussions  
Am I Dying?  
Reflections  
A Difficult Discussion  
Key Points  
Communicating an Unexpected Death  
Pediatric Sudden Death  
Reflections  
Communicating with the Team  
Handling Conflict  
Review  
Summary

Conclusion

Module Summary

## **Module 3: Pain Management in Palliative Care (2 hours)**

### Objective/Purpose:

This module will outline the general strategies related to the nurse's role in providing pain care. Some of this content may be review, depending on where you are in your education, but it is all critical content for your nursing practice. Nurses work with patients, families (of origin and chosen), and the interprofessional team to provide a comprehensive assessment and develop a holistic approach to addressing pain. You will contribute your expertise in assessing the multiple dimensions of pain, advocating for good pain management, and providing compassionate care to patients and family members, in an effort to promote quality of life and minimize physical and nonphysical suffering. The goal of this module is to provide undergraduate and new graduate nurses with knowledge of pain management for patients with serious illness(es).

### Outline:

Introduction

Introduction to Pain Care

What Is Pain?

Pain Is Multidimensional

Biopsychosocial/Spiritual Model

Holistic Pain Assessment

Sources of Pain

Types of Pain

Pain Assessment: Biological/Physical Domain

A Helpful Mnemonic

Pain Assessment: Psychosocial and Affective Domain

Pain Assessment: Spiritual Domain

Pain Assessment Interview

Key Points from the Interview

Practice

Physical Examination

Reassess Pain

Communicating Pain Assessment

Key Points on Communication

Review

Summary

Pain Management

It Takes a Team

Acetaminophen

NSAIDs

Pain Question

Commonly Used Opioids

Adverse Effects of Opioid Administration

Adjuvant Therapy

- Routes of Administration
- Opioid Formulations
- Breakthrough Pain (BTP)
- What Is Equianalgesia?
- Consequence of Undertreatment
- Nonpharmacologic Strategies
- Summary

- Challenges in Pain Management
  - Barriers to Pain Relief
  - Review of Barriers to Pain Relief
  - Undertreatment in Substance Use Disorder
  - Managing Pain in SUD
  - Pain Question
  - Undertreatment in Children
  - Pediatric Pain
  - Undertreatment in Older Adults
  - Others at Risk
  - Your Critical Role as the Nurse
  - Review
  - Summary

- Conclusion
  - Module Summary

## **Module 4: Symptom Management in Palliative Care (2 hours)**

### Objective/Purpose:

People living with serious illness(es) typically experience multiple symptoms throughout their disease trajectory. Nurses need to be knowledgeable about evidence-based assessment and symptom management for common physical, psychological, and spiritual symptoms. Interprofessional teams must work collaboratively with the patient and family (of origin and chosen) when managing symptoms to enhance quality of life and reduce unnecessary suffering. This module will provide you with an overview of common symptoms experienced by patients with serious illness(es) and will emphasize your important role in assessing and managing them. The goal of this module is to provide undergraduate and new graduate nurses with knowledge of symptom management for patients with serious illness(es).

### Outline:

Introduction

#### Introduction to Symptom Management

- Essential Elements
- Symptoms and Suffering
- Comprehensive Assessment in Palliative Care
- Children
- Older Adults
- Symptom Management in Older Adults
- Summary

#### Physical Symptoms

- Common Symptoms
- Dyspnea
  - Assessment of Dyspnea
  - Management of Dyspnea
- Critical Thinking
- Fatigue
  - Assessment of Fatigue
  - Management of Fatigue
- Anorexia and Cachexia
  - Causes of Anorexia and Cachexia
  - Assessment of Anorexia and Cachexia
  - Management of Anorexia and Cachexia
- Nausea and Vomiting
  - Assessment of Nausea and Vomiting
  - Management of Nausea and Vomiting
- Nausea and Vomiting Case Study
- Constipation
  - Assessment of Constipation
  - Management of Constipation
- Review: Meet Mrs. Pittman

- Diarrhea
  - Assessment of Diarrhea
  - Management of Diarrhea
- Insomnia or Sleep Disturbances
  - Assessment of Insomnia or Sleep Disturbances
  - Management of Insomnia or Sleep Disturbances
- Summary

## Psychosocial and Spiritual Issues

- Psychological Issues
  - Depression
    - Assessment of Depression
    - Suicide Assessment
    - Management of Depression
  - Anxiety
    - Causes of Anxiety
    - Assessment of Anxiety
    - Management of Anxiety
  - Critical Thinking Question
  - Cognitive Changes
    - Causes of Cognitive Changes
    - Assessment of Cognitive Changes
    - Management of Cognitive Changes
  - Spiritual Distress
  - Spiritual Crisis
  - Key Points
  - Review: Symptom Management Case Study
- Summary

## Conclusion

- Course Summary



## **Module 5: Loss, Grief, and Bereavement (1.5 hours)**

### Objective/Purpose:

Nurses witness grief in patients and their family members (of origin and/or chosen) every day. This module will assist you to support patients who may be experiencing anticipatory grief and loss and provide excellent bereavement care to families, caregivers, and communities after a loved one has died. Nurses themselves can experience a tremendous amount of loss through the work of caring for persons with serious illness(es). Grief and loss accumulate over time and may cause moral injury, compassion fatigue, and burnout if unacknowledged. Individual and system-level interventions are important for being able to prepare for and process grief. This module will discuss good professional self-care to allow you to continue this sacred work in a healthy manner. The goal of this module is to provide undergraduate and new graduate nurses with an overview of loss, grief, and bereavement in palliative care.

### Outline:

#### Introduction

#### Overview of Loss, Grief, and Bereavement

- Important Terminology
- Types of Grief
- Understanding Check
- The Grief Process
- Everyone Has a Story
- Key Points
- Summary

#### The Nurse's Role in Loss, Grief, and Bereavement

- The Nurse's Role
- Grief Assessment
- Review
- Listen to Their Story
- Grief Interventions
- CARE: A Framework for Communicating Condolence
- Words That Are Helpful
- Words That Are Not Helpful
- Children's Grief
- Caring for a Bereaved Family After a Child's Death
- Grief Interventions for Children and their Families
- Memory Making
- Key Points
- Summary

#### The Effects on the Nurse

- Healthcare Professionals Grieve Too
- Challenges of Nonbeneficial Care
- Impacts on Healthcare Professionals

Moral Agency  
Seeking Help  
Strategies to Prevent Compassion Fatigue and Burnout  
Wellness and Self-Care  
Moral Resilience  
Importance of Self-Care  
Healthcare System Responsibilities  
Systems of Support  
Case Study  
Review  
Summary

Conclusion

Module Summary

## **Module 6: Final Hours of Life (1.5 hours)**

### Objective/Purpose:

Nurses are essential in caring for patients and family during the final hours of life. High-quality end-of-life care requires diligent assessment and intervention, compassionate communication and interprofessional collaboration. Family members (chosen and/or of origin) will remember the final moments of their loved one's life, thus it is critical that nurses take steps to promote peace and minimize suffering and distress. Care at this time demands attention to the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs of patients and the special needs of their families. This module explores best practices for caring for those who are dying and families during the final hours of life. The goal of this module is to prepare undergraduate and new graduate nurses to provide holistic care to patients who are dying and their families.

### Outline:

Introduction

#### Preparing for Death

- A "Good" or Meaningful Death
- Witnessing A Good Death
- Nurses' Experiences with Patients' Deaths
- Reflection
- The Nurse, Dying, and Death
- Being With and Bearing Witness
- "Am I Dying?"
- Effective Communication
- Reflection
- Responding to Patient and Family Questions about Death
- Reflection
- Individualized, Personal Experience
- Preparing for Death
- When the Patient Cannot Tell Us
- Review
- Summary

#### Ethical and Legal Considerations

- Ethical and Legal Considerations at End of Life
- Impact of COVID-19 on End-of-Life Care
- Life-Sustaining Measures
- Resuscitation
- Extracorporeal Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
- Ethical Issues with Resuscitation and LSM
- Key Considerations with Withdrawing LSM
- Medically Administered Nutrition and Hydration
- Thirst and Appetite at End of Life
- Analgesic Use and Controlled Sedation
- Hastened Death Request

Review  
Summary

## Frequent Symptoms Associated with Imminent Death

Dignity-Conserving Care  
Two Roads to Death  
Signs and Symptoms of Imminent Death  
Symptom Management at End of Life  
More Symptom Management at End of Life  
Psychological Concerns  
Spiritual and Cultural Considerations  
The Importance of Spiritual Care  
Nursing Interventions to Support Families  
Consider the Environment  
The Dying Child  
Key Points  
The Dying Older Adult  
Review  
Summary

## Care Following Death

Care Following Death  
Care and Respect of the Patient's Body  
Care of Self  
Review  
Summary

## Conclusion

Module Summary