

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: INNOVATION IN PALLIATIVE CARE IN UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION

ELNEC Innovations Webinar Series – October 2025

Disclosures

Cambia Health Foundation

ELNEC Co-Investigators



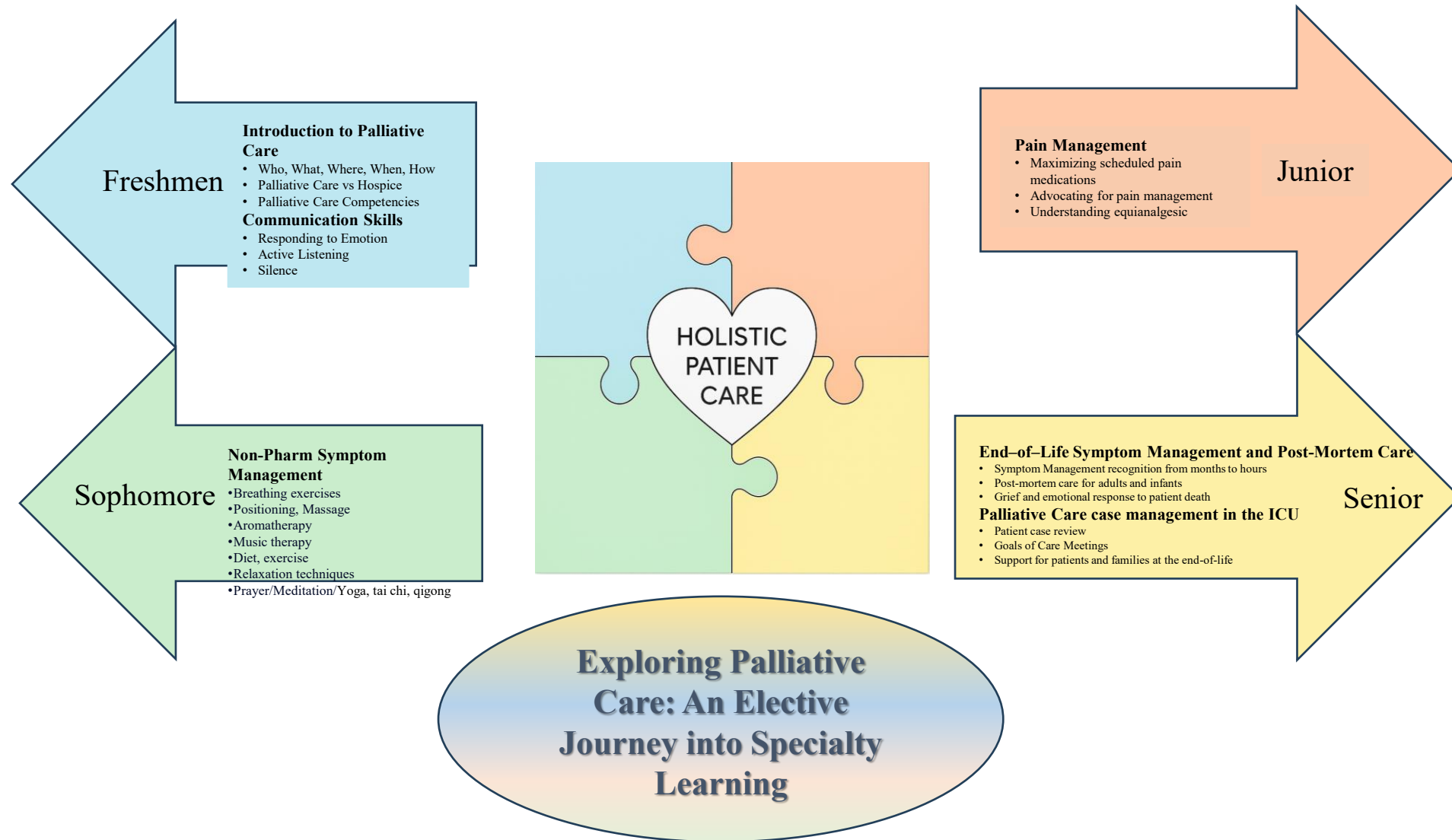
Summer 2025 ELNEC Faculty Workshop

The Heart of Healing: Empowering Student Nurses Through Palliative Care Education

Karen Harden, DNP, RN, AOCNS, NC-BC,
Brittany Niedzwiecki, MSN, CRNP, AOCNP

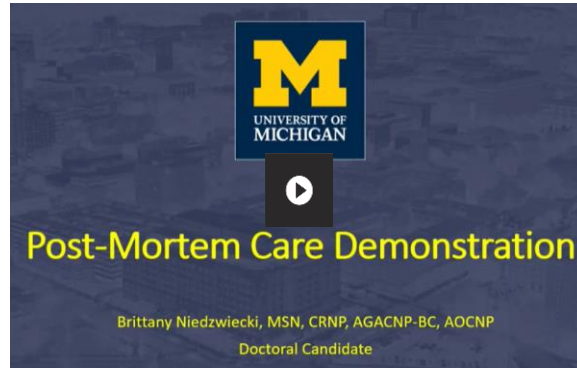
Introducing Our Engaging Undergraduate Palliative Care Curriculum

A Transformative Experience for All Students!



Exemplar: End-of-Life and Post-Mortem Simulation (2hrs)

Pre-Simulation Activities



Simulation Activities

End-of-Life Symptoms Scenarios:

1. Pain management
2. Pain escalation
3. Opioid-induced constipation
4. Terminal secretions (w/sound)

Terminal Secretions		Terminal Restlessness (Akathisia)	
Nonpharmacological Interventions		Nonpharmacological Interventions	
Education	Rationale	Optimize Positioning	Rationale
Reduce fluids	Reduces physical stress, improves circulation, enhances comfort	Optimize Tubing	Position both feet on a solid surface, maintain straight back sitting position, foot stool privacy
Surround	Engages the brain elsewhere, reduces anxiety and fear	Increase Fluid Intake	Adequate fluid intake is required for normal bowel function. Increase high fluid foods like jelly, soup, fruit
Acupuncture	Affects the limbic system, reduces stress and promotes relaxation	Nutritional Interventions	Increase foods high in fiber (e.g. fruits, veg, nuts). Prunes are high in sorbitol = osmotic laxative effect
Pharmacological Interventions		Pharmacological Interventions	
Medication	Rationale	Medication	Rationale
Glycopyrrolate 0.2-1mg SxQ2 Every 4-6hrs	Mild pain, start with these unless contraindicated, escalate to low dose opioids	Serene 8-16mg PO 1-3 times daily OR promethazine 12-25mg PO 1-2x daily	Stimulant and osmotic laxatives are the cornerstone for treating opioid-induced constipation
Scopolamine 1mg/3 days transdermal patch apply 1 patch Q27h	Moderate to severe pain, strong opioids, rapid titration not recommended. These are short-acting and long-acting versions. Be sure to titrate up/down	Pregibon OR Flibron per package insert	Bulk forming laxatives can worsen constipation with inadequate fluid intake; not recommended for opioid-induced constipation
Atropine drops 1% solution SL 1-2 drops every 2-4hrs	Morphine or hydromorphone	GOAL: Be establish comfortable/regular bowel habits and avoid constipation related complications	
Neuroleptic pain	Galoperin, pregabalin, antidepressants or corticosteroids may be added to regimen		



—BREAK—

Post-Mortem Care:

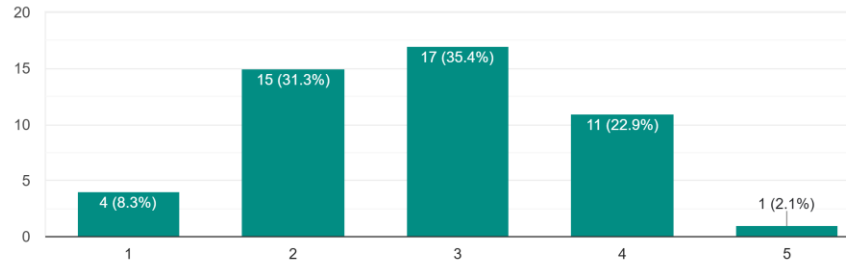
1. Set the tone
(somber music and greeting at door)
2. Pronouncement
(full minute w/crying sound)
3. Students conducted post-mortem care on adult and infant mannequin

Student Feedback and Post-Simulation Reflection

Pre-Survey Responses

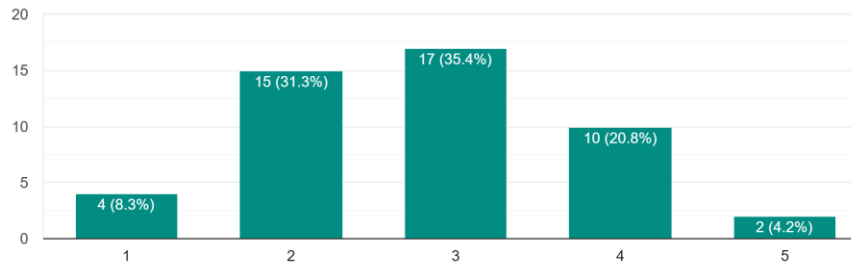
I feel prepared to care for dying patients.

48 responses



I am prepared to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of active dying.

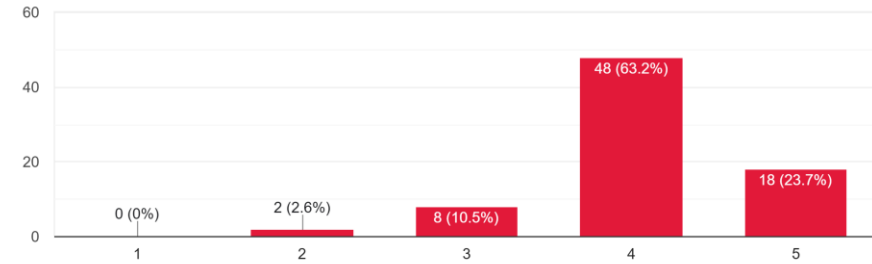
48 responses



Post-Survey Responses

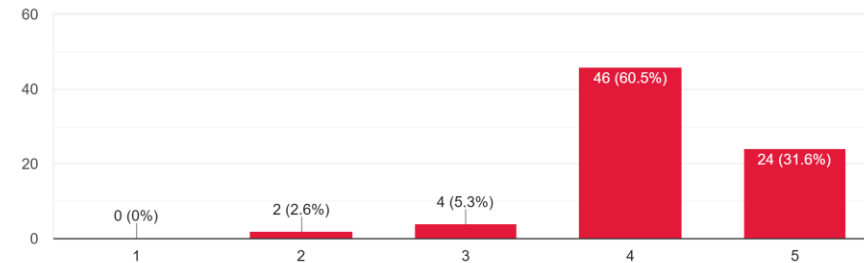
I feel prepared to care for dying patients.

76 responses



I am prepared to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of active dying.

76 responses



Student Quote: “I really enjoyed following the real aspects of caring for a dead patient postmortem as it was hands on and very informative, I believe this experience made me feel more confident with this aspect. I really enjoyed practicing this in simulation before I have to confront it in person.”

A Branching Narrative as an Evidence-Based Learning Strategy for Graduate Students Enrolled in an Introductory Palliative and End of Life Care Course

Chris Fortney, PhD, RN, FPCN, FAAN

Associate Professor

Martha S. Pitzer Center for Women, Children & Youth



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Setting

- Introduction to Palliative and EOL Care Course
- Palliative and EOL Certificate Program
 - 4 courses
 - 2 in College of Nursing, 2 in other departments
 - Must be completed in 1 year
 - Must be delivered asynchronous online



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Introduction

- A branching narrative is an interactive learning tool that presents learners with realistic scenarios that require decisions at key points.
- Each choice leads to new developments while helping students understand the potential outcomes of decisions.
- This approach is particularly effective for teaching complex skills such as clinical reasoning, situational awareness, and soft skills like communication and conflict resolution.



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Rationale

- A branching scenario from a previous course for RN-BSN students required updating for interdisciplinary graduate students and clinicians to provide more complex decisions and opportunities for higher-level thinking.



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Design/Methodology

- Over 6 weeks, the faculty instructor worked with two instructional designers to expand an initial adult scenario and develop a pediatric scenario.
- The activity was planned utilizing paths that would expose students to an array of decisions that a patient might encounter and potential choices that a patient might make.
- A template was used to create the paths on paper, which were then transferred and built in Twine.



Design/Methodology

- Scenario images were AI-generated with the help of Adobe Express.



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Application

- Students receive instructions on how to access and complete the activity in Carmen Canvas.
- They are advised that the scenarios are intentionally complex and may be emotionally challenging.
- The cases use real-world situations, letting students practice supporting patient decisions that reflect patients' own goals, even if they differ from the student's choices.



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Application

- Each case includes relevant background information and clearly defined decision points with available options.
- Students progress through the scenario, making decisions as prompted and observing the outcomes of their choices
- Students are encouraged to complete the activity more than once to explore different patient decisions and outcomes.



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Exploring the Scenarios

- <https://hsiao62osu.itch.io/nursing-5111-decision-making-branching-activity-sarah>
- <https://hsiao62osu.itch.io/nursing-5111-decision-making-branching-activity-jacobi>



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Conclusion

- After completing the branching narrative activity, students will respond to post-case reflection questions to:
 - 1) process their thinking and feelings while completing the activity, and
 - 2) consider decisions for adult and pediatric patients and their families.



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Future Plans

- The activity will be utilized and evaluated in the course in Autumn 2025.
- Development of more scenarios is planned.



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Acknowledgements

- Dr. Susan Thrane developed the original adult branching scenario used in this activity.
- The pediatric case is based on the article by Sartor, N., Bass, A. K., & Overstreet, K. (2024). Changing the Landscape of the Neighborhood: The Expanding Role of the Pediatric Palliative Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. *Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing*, 26(2), 68–73.



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Questions



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Palliative and End of Life Care

St John Fisher University
Rochester, NY
Joy Hogan MSN, PPCNP-BC



Overview

2 credit course offered in first semester of Junior year

**ELNEC is the backbone of this course -
required**



Class Topics

Introduction to Palliative Care

Communication

Pain & Symptom Mgmt

Self-care and Resilience

Cultural Considerations

Grief, Loss & Bereavement

Advance Care Planning

Care of those with DD at EOL

Pediatric Palliative Care

AACN Essentials

Emphasis on Hospice Care

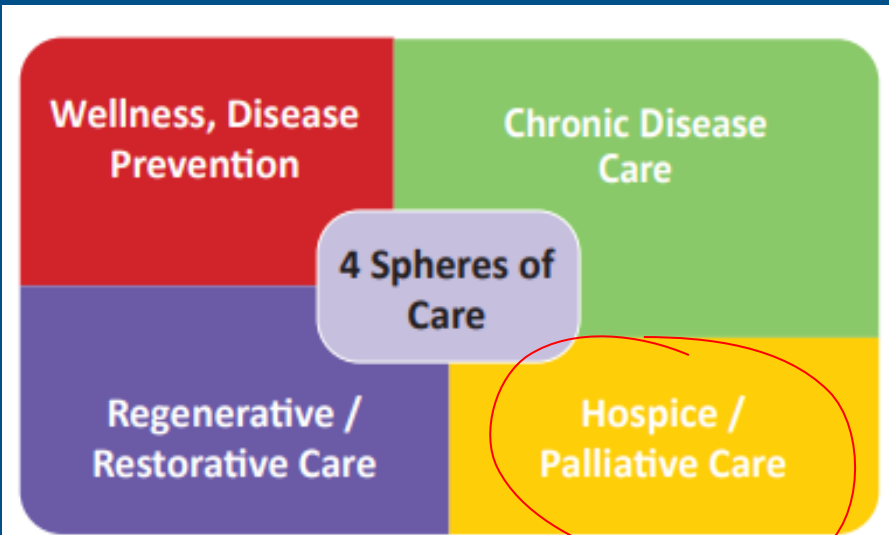


Figure 2: Four Spheres of Care



THE ESSENTIALS

AACN has recently highlighted and encouraged increased exposure for nursing students in hospice care.

“This model provides valuable learning experience outside of the hospital setting to contribute to their hands-on learning and meet national credentialing objectives” (Lipstein et al., 2016; AACN, 2019).

Hands on Care for the Dying

Comfort Care Home Volunteering

Western New York Region

Partnership with 16 Comfort Care Homes

~160 students per year volunteer for 16 hours each

6-8 students assigned to each home

3 weeks “off” of class each semester



Over 2,000 hours
per year provided
to local homes

Details

No clinical instructor needed

Students are participating as “volunteers” under the umbrella of *Community Engaged Learning*

No medication administration allowed

Full Orientation not needed

Must complete 1st 4 weeks of class, 1 hour long orientation video, and in home orientation with director before starting

In-class discussions

Every week - in class discussions of experiences allow for ongoing learning.

Discussion board post after each shift

Volunteer Hours Required

Completion of 16 hours is required to pass the class

1 student at a time

Four - 4 hour shifts each



“Pay it Forward”

16 hours banked towards community health nursing clinical hours in their senior year

Professionalism Agreement

Signed by students

- Willingness to help the staff, residents and family with a positive and motivated attitude.
- Professional and genuine sensitivity to the end of life issues faced by residents and their families.
- Dress according to the expectations of the hospice setting (either scrubs or business casual dress as requested).
- No use of personal electronic devices unless directly related to care of the resident and/or family.
- Clear and timely communication with the contact person at your setting about days/times you will volunteer and any changes to that schedule.
- Practice patient-centered care respectfully and nonjudgmentally with diverse populations of individuals, families, and communities.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality according to HIPPA guidelines.
- Students must function within the agency volunteer parameters with the exception that students cannot administer medications under any circumstances at any of the agencies assigned.
- Volunteer time will not be done during other class time, lab time, or clinical time.
- NO ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

Questions?

St John Fisher University
Rochester, NY
Joy Hogan MSN, PPCNP-BC
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Save the Dates!

Links to register will be on
ELNEC Faculty Corner

Palliative Care Nursing Faculty Burnout and Fulfillment: The Role of Storytelling Through Music in Promoting Emotional Insight

Speakers: Carolyn Phillips (UT Austin)

Date: Nov 19, 2025

Time: 10:00AM PST/12:00PM CST/1:00PM EST

Infusing Primary Palliative Care into Online RN-BSN Programs: A Discussion

Speaker: Dr. Toni Glover (Oakland University)

Date: December 10, 2025

Time: 08:00AM PST/10:00AM CST/11:00AM

Join the Workshop Next Year!

July 16-17, 2026

University of Portland, Portland, OR

Applications for 2026 workshop go live in January 2026

Find out more on [ELNEC Faculty Corner > Upcoming Events](#)