Weaving the Final Threads of Life

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Learning Objectives

• Describe the difference between palliative care and hospice care
• Explain some of the spiritual tasks at the end of life
• Articulate your wishes, hopes and fears as you contemplate your own death

Palliative Care

• What is it?
• How is it used?
• Who gets it?

What is it?

Provides relief from symptoms
Integrates psychological and spiritual aspects of care
Uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and families
Offers support for patients and their families
Is used in conjunction with other therapies that intend to prolong life
Intends to neither hasten nor postpone death
How is it used?

- In the clinic to address ongoing symptom management, goals of care, advance care planning
- In the hospital to address ongoing symptom management, to determine goals of care, advance care planning and to provide emotional, psychological and spiritual support

Who gets it?

Anyone with a complex, serious, life-limiting illness is appropriate for palliative care

Spiritual Care within Palliative Care

“Good quality care occurs when patients are able to express what is holy to them, gives them meaning and helps them transcend their suffering, even if not necessarily relieving it.”

Christina Puchalski
Making Health Care Whole
Hospice Care

What is it?
- Two doctors must agree on prognosis
- Home care, residential hospice or facility
- Support for families to give them confidence in the care of their loved one
- Additional care and support at facility

How is it used?
- Six Months or less
- Pain and symptom management
- Holistic care
- Patient and family as unit
- Self-determined life closure
- Medicare benefit

The Lady and the Reaper
Who gets it?

- Anyone with an illness whose prognosis is less than six months
- Must continue to show decline
- Barriers to receiving hospice

The Four Gifts

- Thank you
- I’m sorry
- I love you
- Goodbye

It takes two to speak the truth – one to speak and another to hear.

*Henry David Thoreau*

Spiritual Pain

*from The Sacred Art of Living and Dying*

- Meaning Pain
- Forgiveness Pain
- Relatedness Pain
- Hopelessness Pain
Meaning Pain
That which promotes motivation and happiness
Making sense of illness and death
What hopes/fears do I have for the next life?

Forgiveness Pain
The ‘common cold’ of spiritual pain
Lack of forgiveness of ourselves and others can make us sick
Willingness to let go for our own sake

Relatedness Pain
How are my relationships with those I care about?
How is my relationship with God?

Hopelessness Pain
Hope = Our human capacity to imagine what could be life-giving
Failure to thrive
‘Terminal illness’ of spiritual pain
Remedies for Meaning Pain

Communion with nature
Logotherapy
Life Review
Dreams/Journaling
Asking Sacred Questions

from The Sacred Art of Living and Dying

Remedies for Forgiveness Pain

Prayer of Gratitude
Confession
Release Rituals
Twelve Step Processes

from The Sacred Art of Living and Dying

Remedies for Relatedness Pain

Grief Therapy
Mingling of Breaths
Metta: Lovingkindness Meditation
Examen

from The Sacred Art of Living and Dying

Remedies for Hopelessness Pain

Energy Therapies
Music Therapy
Anointing/Massage/Aroma
Sacred Ritual

from The Sacred Art of Living and Dying
Spiritual Health Assessment

Healing Through Self Awareness

Based on ‘Healing the Four Dimensions of Spiritual Pain’
In the classical Sacred Art of Living and Dying tradition

It’s about how you live!

Die before you die, so that when you die, you do not die.

*Egyptian Book of the Dead*

If you want to die happily, learn to live.

If you want to live happily, learn to die.

*Latin Proverb*
You are healed of a suffering only by experiencing it to the full.

*Marcel Proust*

Be at peace with your own soul. Enter eagerly into the treasure house that is inside you. The ladder leading to the Kingdom is hidden within your soul. Dive into yourself, and in your soul you will discover the stairs by which to ascend.

*Isaac of Ninevah.*

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**Exercises**

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