

2nd Global Congress on

Hospice & Palliative Care

September 29-30, 2016 Toronto, Canada

CONSUMER DIRECTED CARE AND SPIRITUALITY: END OF LIFE FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

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Session Description: Care planning in residential aged care is a regulatory requirement. Despite a compliance framework, the importance of individualism, one's story and spirituality is integral to the holistic care provision for the older person, especially during end of life. The session will outline clinical assessment processes which achieve a holistic framework of care provision for terminal phase care grounded in the uniqueness of individuality and one's spiritual self. The session will outline how clinical assessment is completed from a lifestyle approach to ensure the most positive end of life experience during the terminal phase of palliation.

Findings: The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus has implemented a number of systemic changes in relation to care planning and assessment to ensure spirituality is a primary consideration as part of the person centred approach to care delivery. The uniqueness of individuality and the interface with cultural, religious practice and spiritual expression are key considerations associated with end of life care planning (Advanced care planning). The Changes to care planning includes a focus on the importance of "story" and encapsulates individuality and the "inner spirit" of Older Australians. Comprehensive spiritual assessment and care planning are paramount to a person centred approach. During palliative and terminal phase care, spirituality is a significant consideration, it cannot be underestimated in its significance to the completion of an individual's story through dying and end of life.

Objectives: An understanding of clinical assessment processes from an individualised perspective which embraces persons lived experiences associated to end of life.

Clinical assessment of a nursing and medical model perspective has a very prescriptive framework that often does not include adequate analysis of spirituality. When completed from a person centred philosophy which embraces an understanding of spirituality the assessment process can encompass a more meaningful context. These results in improved well-being and a quality of end of life experience for not only the individual, but their family and loved ones as well.

An understanding of staff awareness and how to overcome bias when being confronted with spiritual planning and end of life is important. One's own story and spiritual awareness are critical to the success of assessing others and putting this into practice in a consumer directed approach to death and dying.

Personal bias is present in all individuals; this is a consequence of our own individual stories. In order to ensure a comprehensive, holistic spiritual assessment which underpins care planning processes, biases need to be made aware. Staff impacts are significant as spiritual assessment results in confrontation of our own spiritual awareness.

An understanding of the multi-collaborative approach between clinicians and chaplains to achieve optimal outcomes for residents in their dying experience.

Biography

Heidi Dowse is currently employed by The Salvation Army Aged Care Plus, Australia, as the Clinic, Quality and Compliance Manager. Heidi has worked in Aged Care for almost 30 years, holding a variety of positions, including Dementia Specialist and Learning and Development Manager. She currently has a Master's Degree in Nursing where she has researched culture change in aged care.

Heidi is passionate about education and believes the key to change lies in moving the heart of staff before being able to move their thoughts to change. She is able to do this by sharing the stories of the people she had the honour to care for, particularly at the end of their life. Heidi believes in always looking for the shiny in life. So often we spend our lives looking for mud. If that is all you look for, you will miss the shining moments in life.

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