

TITLE: Assessment

Topic: 5

Assessment is a foundation for understanding patient/family needs and symptom management in palliative care.

A systematic process for a comprehensive assessment is an essential element of providing palliative care. Assessment is the initial step in developing a plan of care to meet the specific needs of the patient/family. A thorough assessment takes into consideration a holistic approach to care and includes the following realms; the physical, spiritual, emotional and psychosocial needs of the patient/family. Assessment is an ongoing and fluid process that evolves as the status and goals of the patient/family change.

A multidisciplinary approach to assessment includes;

- A history /physical and medication reconciliation
- A social history, family, siblings and other significant relationships
- Spiritual/Cultural assessment
- Dignity question (What do I need to know about you in order to provide the best care possible?)
- Personal hopes and goals (goals of care, advanced directives and ACP level)
- Diagnostics and reports

Assessment of patient specific symptoms

- Systematic approach such as the (Fraser Health symptom assessment acronym O,P,Q,R,S,T,U and V <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/employees/clinical-resources/hospice-palliative-care> accessed Feb 1, 2017.

Onset- When, how long

Provoking/palliating- what brings it on, makes it better

Quality- what does it feel like

Region/Radiation- where is it, does it spread

Severity-what is the intensity (scale), now, at best, at worst

Treatment-what current treatments, are they effective, side effects

Understanding/impact on you-what do you believe is causing this symptom

Values-what is your goal for this symptom, comfort goal

Assessment tools- ESAS, PPS, SBAR

Communication, care planning, and documentation of a care plan are very important.