

TITLE: Communication 1

Topic: 2

What comprises Communication in Palliative Care?

Effective interpersonal communication in palliative care is fundamental to Palliative Care and the foundation for developing therapeutic relationships with patients, their families and the community of care providers. Communication is a means of connecting with another person. The type and language used in communication will vary depending on the person you are talking to and the intent of the conversation. We communicate in many ways through our words, body language and behaviors.

Communication has multiple purposes:

- To connect, actively listen and engage with people
- To share information, document and collaborate
- To develop a relationship based on openness, honesty and trust
- To develop goals of care that are focused on individual needs
- To provide care that promotes an individual's dignity

The elements of effective communication include an approach that is:

- patient centered
- evidence based
- culturally sensitive
- collaborative
- dynamic and fluid

Some important things to consider when communicating:

- information needs to be accurate, complete and timely
- approach people with compassion and kindness
- respect where people are in the understanding of their illness
- approach people with curiosity and appreciative inquiry
- Recognize your own feeling and acknowledge the feeling of the people you are communicating with
- provide a setting that is quiet and private when possible

The intent of communication can be focused on:

- understanding the individual (dignity, family relationships, and care preferences)
- providing difficult news and disclosure
- data collection
- transfer of care between providers and facilities (share common tools and language)
- sharing information and teaching with patients and families