

POPLPRAC 720

Psychosocial Issues in Palliative Care

15 Points
Semester 1, 2011

Course Prescription

The psychological and social study of patients with cancer or active progressive disease, unresponsive to curative treatment. Existential philosophy and models of coping with suffering, communication in palliative care, psychiatric disorders in palliative care, and bereavement.

Goals of the Course

The course will enable the student to

- Develop an awareness and understanding of the psychosocial impact of life threatening illness on patient, family and care team;
- Develop awareness of own attitudes, behaviours, coping and communication styles;
- Develop an advanced set of skills which enhance ability to work therapeutically with patients and families facing/following life threatening illness;
- Be introduced to the notion of the therapeutic self in palliative care;

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course, the student will have the knowledge to:

- Undertake a comprehensive patient history including psychosocial, spiritual, cultural and family dimensions;
- Demonstrate development of communication skills appropriate to working within palliative care;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the differing constructs of the term 'family';
- Demonstrate skills in organising and conducting a family meeting/conference;
- Demonstrate a collaborative working style, which enables a patient/family to develop confidence and elicit their own expertise to cope with the dying period;
- Involve social networks and community resources in care;
- Recognise the special needs of children and other groups within the family and social structure;
- Define what spirituality means to them personally and reflect on the ways that impacts on responses to others;
- Separate attitudes of spirituality, attitudes of faith and the concept of suffering;
- Have reflected on the relationship between hope, comfort and spirituality;
- Be able to distinguish between normal and abnormal grief reactions;
- Develop an understanding and skills to assist people through bereavement and loss;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the need for appropriate boundary setting and self-care;
- Understand the effects of emotional distress in self and others;
- Develop personal reflective skills;

Content Outline

Course components include:

- Spirituality, models of spirituality;
- Rituals and Hope;
- Grief Theories;
- Depression or Grief;
- Listening skills;
- The therapeutic self

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Learning and Teaching

The course is run in distance learning mode and includes two 2-day seminars consisting of discussion sessions and presentations by specialist speakers. Students also receive a spiral bound copy of the course outline, assessments and details of the seminars and access to digitised reading material.

Teaching Staff

Honorary Teaching Fellow: Jo Hathaway Email: j.hathaway@auckland.ac.nz
Academic Co-ordinator and Lecturer: Yvonne Bray Email: y.bray@auckland.ac.nz

Programme Administrator

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Campus Teaching Dates in 2011

There will be two 2-day seminars scheduled for Thursdays and Fridays during semester one.

The School of Population Health postgraduate timetable with Campus dates is available on the website: www.health.auckland.ac.nz/population-health/postgrad

Learning Resources

Access to the following resources is recommended.

Hanks, G., Doyle, D., Calman, C. and Cherny, N. (eds) (2003) Oxford Textbook of Palliative Medicine 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Palliative care journals

A list of recommended websites and digitised readings will be provided at the start of the course.

Assessment

100% coursework. Students working in health care with at least a component of palliative care as part of their current practice will be able to complete the course assessments.

Course assessment consists of a three-part course diary/journal and a 3000 word essay.

Part one of the course diary is a short introduction to the student and is due at the first seminar. Part two consists of entries and discussion in the diary for the first half of the semester and is due at the second seminar. Part three consists of entries and discussion in the course diary for the second half of the semester and is due in early November. The course diary represents 50% of the total assessment mark and the essay due at the end of the course work represents 50% of total assessment mark. Students who are not in current palliative care practice please seek advice from the teaching team regarding completion of the course journal.

'Turn-it-in' is a recommended tool for students to screen assignments (applicable to assignment 2) for plagiarism.

Programme and Course Advice

This course is multidisciplinary in approach and suitable for students eligible for postgraduate study. Health professionals who have fulfilled the admission requirements for postgraduate study are able to enrol in this course. Doctors enrolling in the Medical Science schedule are required to have a current registration with the Medical Council of New Zealand or alternatively can enrol in the Health Science schedule.

Postgraduate nursing students who wish to enrol in a Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science are advised to contact the School of Nursing for guidance on a recommended pathway and core courses that need to be completed.

Other courses that may be of interest are POPLHLTH 746, POPLPRAC 722, POPLPRAC 723, POPLPRAC 721 POPLPRAC 724 and POPLPRAC 701 for health professionals.