

August 2023



Why is effective communication so important?

Understanding a client's concerns and what is important to them is at the heart of client centered care. Creating client centered care through communication is an important aspect of palliative care that can facilitate improved quality of life and reduce suffering.

When we are medically unable to cure or modify disease, communication is perhaps one of the most important things we can do. Communication helps individuals maintain their sense of dignity and find meaning in the face of advancing illness.

Communication affects both quality of care and quality of life. It can influence symptom control, understanding of information, decision making and the ability to cope.

Effective communication can reduce uncertainty, help people to feel understood, maintain a sense of control, feel a sense of hope, and establish and maintain therapeutic relationships.

In this issue we will showcase the *Serious Illness Conversation Guide* which guides providers step by step through how to have a serious illness conversation, share some communication webinars and videos, and list some free education opportunities. We will also share a bit about May's Joy wall project.



In this issue:

- How to talk about death/dying without talking about death/dying
- Communication in palliative care
- Joy wall project
- *Serious Illness Conversation Guide*
- Available free education

Important Dates

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month <http://www.cbcf.org/>

October 14 - World Hospice and Palliative Care Day <http://www.thewhpca.org/world-hospice-and-palliative-care-day/about>

November 21— National Grief and Bereavement Day <https://www.chpca.ca/campaigns/bereavementday/>

Looking to Build Your Communication Skills?

Here are a couple of free online webinars for health care providers we would like to highlight:

- How to Talk about Death/Dying Without Talking about Death/Dying



Dr Hsien Seow and Dr Samantha Winemaker started the Waiting Room Revolution podcast channel and upcoming book to support patients and families when facing serious illnesses. In their podcasts, they share the advice of health care providers, patients, and families about how to have a better illness experience. Through it all, they have distilled the wisdom into skills that anyone can use along the journey. In this webinar, Dr. Winemaker shared the “7 skills” and how they can be used by health care providers like PSWs and other front-line home care providers!

<https://lifeanddeathmatters.ca/webinars/webinar-how-to-talk-about-death-dying-without-talking-about-death-dying/>

- Communication in Palliative Care

This session focuses on communication skills that will increase quality of serious illness conversations rooted in evidence-based materials from VitalTalk, lessons learned from essential conversations in palliative care, and the necessary skills to support advance care planning conversations.

<https://www.echopalliative.com/2023/02/08/communication-in-palliative-care/>



Palliative Care - Canada

BY

 Pallium Canada

Joy Wall Project

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Joy Wall Project during Hospice Palliative Care Week. Dame Cicely Saunders, the founder of the first modern hospice explained, *“You matter because you are you, and you matter to the end of your life. We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully, but also to live until you die”*.

This hopeful and joyful sentiment inspired the PCRT to invite Yukoners to share their joy. Through various events the PCRT collected over 160 entries from Yukoners hailing from as far as Beaver Creek answering the question “what brings you joy”. We found that nature, family, friends, pets and smiling topped the list in bringing Yukoners joy.



Serious Illness Conversation Guide

What is a serious illness conversation?

A Serious Illness Conversation is a provider-initiated discussion that:

- Asks patients about values and goals using a structured format
- Shares prognosis, when appropriate
- De-emphasizes treatments and procedures
- Occurs early in the course of a serious illness
- Provides a foundation for making decisions in the future
- Should be reviewed/revisited over time
- Is valuable and therapeutic even if medical decisions are not being made

Why should we have a serious illness conversation?

There are several reasons to have these conversations including:

- Enhanced goal-concordant care
- Improved quality of life
- Higher patient satisfaction
- Better patient and family coping
- Eased burden of decision-making for families
- More and earlier hospice care
- Fewer hospitalizations
- Improved bereavement outcomes

Mack JCO 2010; Wright JAMA 2008; Chiachiaro AATS 2015; Detering BMJ 2010; Zhang Annals 2009; Temel JCO 2017

For more information on the guide you can visit the BC Centre for Palliative Care

<https://www.bc-cpc.ca/serious-illness-conversations/>

Serious Illness Conversation Guide training videos

<https://www.ariadnelabs.org/serious-illness-conversation-guide-training/>

Serious Illness Conversation Guide

PATIENT-TESTED LANGUAGE

- SET UP** "I would like to **talk together** about what's happening with your health and **what matters to you**. **Would this be ok?**"
- ASSESS** "To make sure I share information that's helpful to you, can you tell me **your understanding** of what's happening with your health now?"
- "How much **information about what might be ahead** with your health would be helpful to discuss today?"
- SHARE** "Can I share my understanding of what may be ahead with your health?"
- Uncertain:** "It can be difficult to predict what will happen. **I hope you will feel as well as possible** for a long time, and we will work toward that goal. **It's also possible that you could get sick quickly**, and I think it is important that **we prepare** for that."
- OR
- Time:** "I **wish** this was not the case. I am **worried** that time may be as short as *(express a range, e.g. days to weeks, weeks to months, months to a year)*."
- OR
- Function:** "It can be difficult to predict what will happen. **I hope you will feel as well as possible** for a long time, and we will work toward that goal. **It's also possible that it may get harder to do things** because of your illness, and I think it is important that we prepare for that."
- Pause: Allow silence. Validate and explore emotions.**
- EXPLORE** "If your health was to get worse, what are your **most important goals?**"
- "What are your biggest **worries?**"
- "What **gives you strength** as you think about the future?"
- "What **activities** bring joy and meaning to your life?"
- "If your illness was to get worse, **how much would you be willing to go through** for the possibility of more time?"
- "How much do the **people closest to you know** about your priorities and wishes for your care?"
- "Having talked about all of this, **what are your hopes** for your health?"
- CLOSE** "I'm hearing you say that ____ **is really important to you** and that you are **hoping for** _____. Keeping that in mind, and what we know about your illness, I **recommend** that we _____. This will help us make sure that your **care reflects what's important to you**. **How does this plan seem to you?**"
- "**I will do everything I can** to support you through this and to make sure you get the **best care possible.**"



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Pictured is the updated and simplified version, released in 2023, it uses language designed to be more inclusive and accessible.

<https://www.ariadnelabs.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Serious-Illness-Conversation-Guide.2023-05-18.pdf>



How to Talk About End-of-Life Care with Dying Patients.

Short video by Atul Gawande

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7XQEY3MtrI>

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Free Palliative Care Education on YGLearn

Award-winning palliative care courses for health care professionals

Pallium's Learning Essential Approaches to Palliative Care (LEAP) is Canada's leading suite of courseware on palliative care for health care organizations and professionals. LEAP courses provide health care professionals with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to help provide palliative care to patients and families facing life-limiting illnesses in a more timely and effective way. LEAP courses are currently free for all Yukoners using public YGLearn access, we encourage you to sign up soon.

- **Pallium Canada LEAP PSW Online:**
<https://yglearn.gov.yk.ca/palliativecare/4316>
- **Pallium Canada LEAP Fundamentals:**
<https://yglearn.gov.yk.ca/palliative-care/4312>

Copy and paste these links into Google Chrome then request a course enrollment code.

Education Modules

Copy and paste these links into google chrome:

- **Introduction to Palliative Care Service Delivery in the Yukon:**
<https://yglearn.gov.yk.ca/palliative-care/3806>
- **Yukon Advance Care Planning:**
<https://yglearn.gov.yk.ca/palliative-care/3031>
- **Victoria Hospice Palliative Performance Scale (PPSv2):**
<https://yglearn.gov.yk.ca/palliative-care/3203>
- **Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS-r):**
<https://yglearn.gov.yk.ca/palliative-care/1866>

The Palliative Care Resource Team

How does the Palliative Care Resource Team (PCRT) support Yukoner's living with a life-limiting illness and the people caring for them?

- We connect individuals to existing services and programs.
- We provide links to resources and information regarding a variety of topics, including: advance care planning and caregiver specific supports.
- We provide public education sessions.

How does PCRT support Yukon health care providers?

- We assist with health systems navigation.
- We support care transitions and discharge planning.
- We offer symptom management consultation.
- We link health care providers to best practice resources, tools and information.
- We facilitate and provide palliative care education for health care providers.

For more information about the palliative care resource team and our services please contact us at:

Email: palliativecare@yukon.ca

Phone: (867) 667-9380

<https://yukon.ca/en/palliative-care>