

A message from your Palliative Care Resource Team

July 2024



New! Symptom Management Guide for Health Care Assistants*

The [BC Centre for Palliative Care](#) recently developed a new symptom management resource for Health Care Assistants (HCAs) (*including all job titles such as Care Aide, Home Support Worker, Community Health Worker etc.). This guide can be used by HCAs in all health settings to support individuals living with advancing life limiting illness who are experiencing symptoms.

HCAs play a vital role in providing holistic and person/family centered care ([Murray, 2020](#)). HCAs are the eyes and ears of the interdisciplinary team and are often the first team member to notice when there is a new or changing symptom (Murray, 2020). This tool intends to help HCAs connect the name of the symptom to what they are seeing and hearing and give ideas about how to support the comfort of the client. This includes understanding what is important to the client/family to ensure the care matches what is most important to them. For more information visit <https://www.bc-cpc.ca/symptom-management-guide-for-health-care-assistants/> or call the [Palliative Care Resource Team \(PCRT\)](#). PCRT is available to support your HCAs with the application of this new resource within their scope.

In this issue:

- New symptom management guide for Health Care Assistants.
- Where to learn more about symptom management in palliative care
- Free Public YG Learn Modules
- Palliative Care Competency Self Assessment
- Upcoming at Hospice Yukon
- Pallium ECHO Webinars

Important Dates

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month—Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation - <http://www.cbcf.org/>

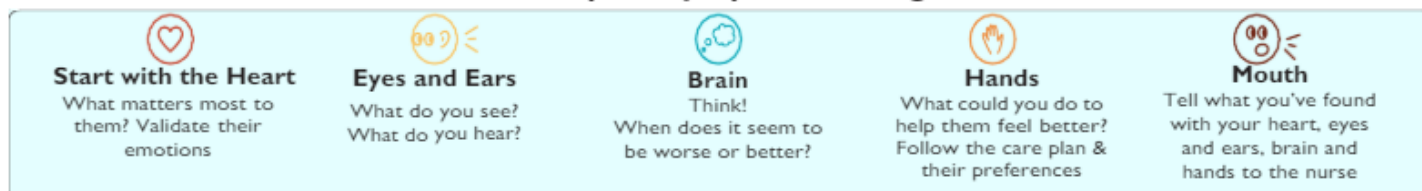
National Children's Hospice Palliative Care Day—October 12th, 2024 <https://www.chpca.ca/campaigns/hpcfchildren/>

National Grief and Bereavement Day—November 21st, 2024 <https://www.chpca.ca/campaigns/bereavementday/>

World Hospice and Palliative Care Day—October 12th <https://thewhpc.org/world-hospice-and-palliative-care-day/about-2/>



The 5 steps of symptom management





Symptom Management Guide for Health Care Assistants* - 2023

* Including all job titles such as Care Aide, Home Support Worker, Community Health Worker, LTC Aide etc.

The 5 steps of symptom management

 Start with the Heart What matters most to them? Validate their emotions	 Eyes and Ears What do you see? What do you hear?	 Brain Think! When does it seem to be worse or better?	 Hands What could you do to help them feel better? Follow the care plan & their preferences	 Mouth Tell what you've found with your heart, eyes and ears, brain and hands to the nurse
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What do you see? What do you hear?



Hallucinations, agitation, confusion and/or drowsy & withdrawn



Drowsy, weakness



Frowning, moaning, calling out



Bloated abdomen, straining to pass BM



Lack of appetite, weak, pale, clutching stomach



Dry mouth, fatigue, dizziness, loss of appetite, weight loss

What could make it better? Follow care plan & preferences

Delirium

- Calm voice and gentle reassurance
- Visible clock, calendar, familiar items
- Hearing aids and eyeglasses
- Encourage meaningful activity
- Calm room

Fatigue

- Assist with activity
- Focus on what they CAN do
- Balance activity and rest
- Suggest less demanding activities (music? puzzles?)

Pain

- Warm blanket or cold compress
- Soothing touch
- Reposition
- Encourage to report pain. Try alternative words when asking: sore?uncomfortable?

Constipation

- Encourage fluids
- Support activity, as able
- Toilet after meals, if possible
- Give privacy & time during toileting
- If bed-bound, place on left-side with warm cloth on back

Nausea & Vomiting

- Keep air & room fresh
- Avoid strong smells
- Small sips of water or ice chips
- Frequent mouth care

Reduced eating or drinking

- Offer other ways to take in fluid (eg: ice chips)
- Frequent mouth care
- Flexibility in when, what, and how much client eats
- Prioritize comfort & rest

What do you see? What do you hear?



Coughing



Coughing, choking, Food coming back up into mouth



Breaths sound wet, cannot clear throat



Difficulty breathing, rapid & shallow breaths



Hiccoughs



Scratching, dry skin

What could make it better? Follow care plan & preferences

Cough

- Assist with positioning
- Support during and after coughing due to fatigue
- Open window, use a fan

Difficulty Swallowing

- Place in upright position to eat or drink
- Mouth care before & after meals
- Soft, moist foods
- Slow, small bites when eating

Noisy breathing

- Frequent mouth care
- Humidify room
- Raise HOB
- Sips of fluid, only if alert
- If not alert, position side-lying

Shortness of breath

- Use a fan or open window
- Raise HOB in supported upright position
- Ask YES or NO questions
- Plan for and pace activity

Hiccoughs

- If possible, try big breath in, hold, then long steady exhale
- Sips of ice water
- Breathe into paper bag
- Small meals

Itchy

- Use cream or moisturizer
- Luke warm baths or wash with warm cloth, pat to dry
- Avoid fragrant soaps, creams
- Light and breathable clothing

Report to nurses and family. Use:

The person/family said _____ is the most important to them

I saw and heard _____

I noticed it seems to be worse or better when _____

I tried _____ and it did/did not seem to help

Want to learn more about symptom management in palliative care?



Strengthen Your Core

The [BC Centre for Palliative Care](#) has created a series of **FREE** online modules (15-30 minutes each) to [Strengthen Your Core](#) regarding [8 domains of palliative care practice](#) for health care providers (HCPs) of various disciplines. These modules are intended to help HCPs become more familiar with palliative care and a palliative approach to care for people living with life-limiting advanced illness in any setting.

B.C. Inter-Professional Palliative Symptom Management Guidelines

These best practice **FREE** guidelines are intended for interprofessional clinicians working with adults living with advanced life-limiting illness. These guidelines do not replace MD/NP orders and are intended to guide symptom assessment and intervention in the absence of referral to a palliative care specialist. The [Palliative Care Resource Team](#) is here to support you regarding your client's symptom management! For more information about the best practice guidelines visit: <https://www.bc-cpc.ca/publications/symptom-management-guidelines/>



ECHO Webinars

Free palliative care online webinars for health care providers (ongoing). The Palliative Care ECHO Project is a capacity building telementoring program, designed to create virtual communities of learners. The project brings together local health care providers with regional, provincial/territorial, and national subject matter experts. All ECHO online webinars are recorded and available for viewing at your convenience. Find them at: www.pallium.ca/palliative-care-echo

National Hospice Palliative Care Week May 5-11, 2024



To celebrate National Hospice Palliative Care week, the Palliative Care Resource Team (PCRT) collaborated with Yukon Hospice and members of the Continuing Care First Nation Liaison Services to create a display at the Whitehorse Public Library for the month of May. The goal was to highlight the various supports/resources available to Yukoner's living with a life-limiting illness, and their caregivers, throughout the illness journey. For more information about palliative care and advance care planning supports and resources, contact the PCRT at palliativecare@yukon.ca or call 867-667-9380.



Free Public YG Learn Education Modules

- 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>

Where are your knowledge gaps in palliative care?

Take a discipline specific self-assessment to find out!

<https://www.partnershipagainstcancer.ca/topics/palliative-care-competency-framework/self-assessments/>



Upcoming at



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|--------------|-----------------------|
| September | Grief Walking Group |
| September 25 | Living with Loss |
| November 1 | Loss in the Workplace |

Details at www.hospiceyukon.net/events

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>