

Seminar Notes and Activities

End-of-Life Care Seminar – Communication in end-of-life care

Group discussions:

1. In a small group, discuss how you might maximise your skills and expertise in the following areas:
 - a. Understanding your own strengths and limitations in end-of-life communication, e.g., asking a trusted colleague to watch or listen to you responding to a patient or family.
 - b. Focussing on and practicing one skill at a time.
 - c. Seeking feedback from an effective and experienced communicator.
 - d. Practicing patience and consideration.
 - e. Reflecting on your own practice.
 - f. Any others?
2. Do you think of yourself as a good communicator with patients and families when it comes to negotiating goals of care? Why or why not?
3. Be honest – when clinically appropriate can you say the word ‘dying’ in conversations with patients (when they are dying)?
4. Which of the following do you find challenging, and where or who would you go to for assistance?
 - a. When a patient and family’s expectations of the future are very different to clinical reality.
 - b. Interdisciplinary team disagreements, stress, or incoordination about end-of-life care.
 - c. Not knowing how to recognise patients who could be in the last 12 months of life.
 - d. When you see patient suffering. What self-care strategies work for you? How do you put things into perspective, for example, after a stressful event at work?
5. If appropriate, are you able to apologise in your clinical practice setting?
6. What is one aspect of your communication that you will develop further?

