

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC COMPETENCES

Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care



MEMBERSHIP OF DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC WORK GROUP CHAPLAINCY/PASTORAL CARE

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1. The National Association of Health care Chaplains (NAHC) is a professional association whose members serve as chaplains in hospital and health care facilities in Ireland.
 2. The Health care Chaplaincy Board (HCB) is a sub-committee of the Council for Health care of the Irish Bishops' Conference. The HCB is the certifying and regulating body for Catholic Health care Chaplaincy throughout Ireland.
 3. The Chaplaincy Accreditation Board (CAB) certifies Health care Chaplains following interview and meeting the standards of CAB. The CAB operates under the auspices of the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland. As a body it will certify members of other church/faiths groups subject to the support of the relevant authorities of that church/faith.
 4. Association of Clinical Pastoral Education Ireland (ACPE (I)) Ltd is a professional interfaith association which certifies persons as pastoral educators in the clinical pastoral education (CPE) method. CPE supervisors direct CPE programmes and administer CPE centres





DOMAIN OF COMPETENCE 1

PRINCIPLES OF PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care aims to improve the quality of life of people with life-limiting conditions and their families, not only by treating their physical symptoms but also by attending to their psychological, social and spiritual needs. Palliative care is applicable for people of any age and may be integrated at any point in the disease trajectory from diagnosis through the continuum of care to bereavement.

INDICATORS

As a health care professional you should:

- Understand and be able to describe the meaning of the term 'life-limiting condition'
- Understand and be able to apply the principles of palliative care that affirm life, offer people with life-limiting conditions a support system to help them live as actively as possible until death with optimal quality of life and help families cope during illness
- Understand the significance of the physical, psychological, social and spiritual issues that affect people with life-limiting conditions and their families throughout the continuum of care
- Demonstrate the ability to use the palliative care approach as early as is appropriate in order to facilitate person-centred practice that recognises the concerns, goals, beliefs and culture of the person and her/his family
- Provide empathetic care to individuals with life-limiting conditions and their families, with clear regard to the individuality of each person
- Show a commitment to one's own continued professional development and learning and facilitate the learning and development of others, in order to improve care for those with life-limiting conditions and their families
- Show a commitment to developing self-care strategies and to attending to any impact that working with people facing life-limiting conditions and their families may have on you.



ALL

As a Chaplain you should:

- Recognise that chaplaincy care is an essential element of holistic care for the person with a life-limiting condition and their family
- Understand the nature of spirituality and recognise that everyone has a spiritual dimension and that for many people this may have a religious component
- Assist the person with a life-limiting condition to discern their spiritual needs and create a safe space where they can name and address them
- Recognise that the opportunity for human development; physical, emotional and spiritual, is an essential component of palliative care
- Understand and appreciate that spiritual and emotional pain often results from a loss of meaning and unmet spiritual needs
- Engage pastorally with persons who are experiencing spiritual distress and pain
- Understand and appreciate that in some cases suffering can be seen as part of the normal, process of living with the profound challenges of having a progressive illness, functional disability, and awareness of impending death
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the main world faiths, philosophies, beliefs, practices, cultures and traditions around life, illness, dying and death
- Offer support and encouragement to the multidisciplinary team in order to promote wellbeing and self-care

SOME

As a Chaplain with an additional level of engagement with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Have the capacity to integrate spiritual and/or religious care into the appropriate palliative care setting
- Be committed to ongoing development, personally, pastorally and professionally
- Be familiar with research in palliative care and use this to inform practice.

FEW

As a Chaplain working primarily with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Be familiar with family systems practice and its importance within the palliative care setting
- Be committed, involved and take a leadership role in the delivery of spiritual and /or religious care within the context of a multidisciplinary team approach.
- Promote research and development of bereavement care, including audit of own practice.





DOMAIN OF COMPETENCE 2

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is essential to the application of palliative care principles and to the delivery of palliative care. Communication is particularly important where bad news has to be relayed, when difficult decisions regarding treatment continuance and/or cessation are to be made and where the communication needs of the person with a life-limiting condition and their family differ. Communication is also important where circumstances are ambiguous or uncertain and when strong emotions and distress arise. Specific consideration should be given to communication as a method of:

- Supporting and enabling therapeutic relationships with a person with a life-limiting condition and her/his family
- Ensuring that the person and her/his family understand and participate in decision-making regarding care to the extent that she/he is able to and wishes to be involved
- Enabling inter-professional teamwork.

INDICATORS

As a health care professional you should:

- Understand the essential role communication plays in palliative care
- Understand the different types of communication e.g. verbal, non-verbal, visual, written, and interpersonal interaction (either one-to-one or with a group or team)
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with the person with a life-limiting condition, their family and the interdisciplinary team in order to establish, maintain and conclude a therapeutic relationship
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively with individuals and families from diverse cultures and different backgrounds, using professional interpreters (Appendix 1) where necessary and/or assistive communication technology where necessary
- Be able to modify your own communication style to facilitate communication with individuals with a range of communication impairments or seek facilitation in this area if required
- Understand the importance of using strategies that empower effective communication e.g. active listening, plain language, appropriate tone, clarifying statements, inviting questions
- Demonstrate an ability to be attentive to the person through careful listening to help the person and their family feel they have been heard
- Support individuals (or parents in the case of children and minors) to make informed decisions regarding the level of information they wish to receive and want to share with their family
- Act as an advocate for the person and their family to ensure appropriate and timely palliative care intervention

ALL

As a Chaplain you should:

- Recognise and appreciate that the quality of pastoral presence is an essential component of spiritual care
- In the course of pastoral ministry be fully attentive to the individual with a life-limiting condition and demonstrate the ability to connect and empathise with them
- Demonstrate sensitivity in pastoral conversations with patients, families and significant others
- Understand that the communication of information which changes the person's understanding of their situation and/or influences their decision-making or planning is an on-going process and not a single event
- Provide person-centred, family-focused chaplaincy care that understands and respects diversity in all its dimensions
- Use pastoral interventions and engage in pastoral conversations, which are age-appropriate
- Apply best practice in spiritual assessment and documentation to help determine and

communicate interdisciplinary plans of care

- Recognise, understand and be sensitive to the significant changes in the person's condition when moving toward end of life and facilitate the individual, and their family to consider options for spiritual care and support
- Have the skill and capacity to engage respectfully and sensitively with patients around their beliefs, fears, hopes and uncertainties regarding death and afterlife
- Whilst respecting the individual's beliefs and wishes, ensure that spiritual and/or religious rituals and/or sacraments for end of life, are available
- Through spiritual accompaniment, help the individual with a life-limiting condition to make their final journey with dignity, peace and compassion, while also providing support to their family
- Demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge of the key physical, psychological and social principles in palliative care in order to communicate effectively with the multidisciplinary team
- Understand and practice appropriate principles of confidentiality in relation to matters of a private and sensitive nature.

SOME

As a Chaplain with an additional level of engagement with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Provide spiritually and culturally appropriate chaplaincy support during patient and family conferences and when participating in support groups.

FEW

As a Chaplain working primarily with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Contribute to and support discussions between individuals, their families and staff members and recognise potential differences in decision making in the context of palliative care
- Understand how different styles of communication can be adapted and used to enhance communication in complex situations at end of life
- As part of the multidisciplinary team assist in the mediation of conflict in decision-making in the palliative care setting and work towards consensus building in care planning
- Support the multidisciplinary team, parents/guardians/families in sharing difficult or bad news, relating to illness or death, with children and vulnerable adults; facilitating direct supportive communication with them, where appropriate
- Anticipate and facilitate the distinctive needs of parents, families and colleagues in perinatal palliative care





DOMAIN OF COMPETENCE 3

OPTIMISING COMFORT AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Individuals with life-limiting conditions and their families can be affected not only in physical, but also in psychological, social and spiritual ways. Optimising comfort and quality of life for the person with a life-limiting condition and her/his family is a dynamic process that involves anticipating, acknowledging, assessing and responding to a range of symptoms and needs in a proactive and timely manner in order to prevent and relieve suffering.

INDICATORS

As a health care professional you should:

- Understand the significance of anticipating and responding to the needs of people with life-limiting conditions and their families (e.g. physical, psychological, social and spiritual) in a proactive and timely manner
- Understand how the palliative care approach can enhance the assessment and management of symptoms
- Exhibit an ability to apply a range of assessment tools to gather information
- Be able to evaluate non-complex interventions and propose alternative actions if deemed necessary
- Recognise the importance and benefit of multidisciplinary working in optimising comfort and enhancing the quality of life of the person with a life-limiting condition and her/his family
- Recognise the ways in which people with life-limiting conditions and their families can be engaged in self-management of their condition
- Demonstrate professional awareness of the scope of, and benefits of, timely and appropriate access to specialist palliative care services
- Be aware of the uniqueness of a good death and facilitate the achievement of this as far as possible



ALL

As a Chaplain you should:

- Be able to help the person living with a life-limiting condition to feel assured that chaplains are capable of accompanying persons of all faith traditions, persons who profess no faith, persons whose lives are guided by a particular life philosophy
- Demonstrate an ability to assist members of the multidisciplinary team to understand the nature and importance of addressing the spiritual and religious needs of the individual and how these may impact on wellbeing
- Demonstrate an ability to assess the spiritual/religious needs of the person with a life-limiting condition and share as appropriate with the multidisciplinary team
- At the request of the individual with a life-limiting condition or their family liaise with the individuals parish clergy, faith group, spiritual companions/leaders and/or other community religious/spiritual and cultural resources.

SOME

As a Chaplain with an additional level of engagement with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Demonstrate an ability to analyse appropriate knowledge and information to inform decision making in end of life care
- In the context of your current role, support the team when considering the care and treatment options for the person with a life-limiting condition with due regard to the persons wishes.
- Be able to recognise and at times anticipate the need to change and adapt the focus of pastoral care intervention at critical points during a life-limiting condition, supporting the person with a life-limiting condition and their family through times of transition

FEW

As a Chaplain working primarily with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Provide specialist pastoral care interventions based on continuing assessment of palliative and end of life care needs.





DOMAIN OF COMPETENCE 4

CARE PLANNING AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

Care planning in palliative care is characterised by coordinating and integrating person-centred care in order to promote quality of life for people with life-limiting conditions and their families. It involves assessing need, promoting and preserving choice, predicting likely problems and planning for the future in the context of a changing and deteriorating disease trajectory. Care planning ensures that multiple disciplines and agencies can be accessed and referred to as required in a timely manner. People with life-limiting conditions should be helped to engage with care planning to the extent that they are able to and wish to be involved. The concerns of families and carers should be taken into account as part of this process.

INDICATORS

As a health care professional you should:

- Recognise the impact of a life-limiting condition on the person and her/his family and be able to provide support in order to help the individual to adapt to the changes in her/his condition
- Recognise the impact of a life-limiting condition on the person and her/his family's mental health and coping mechanisms and be able to provide support in order to help the individual to adapt to the bereavement and loss
- Appreciate the roles, responsibilities and professional boundaries of individual members of the interdisciplinary team
- Understand the collaborative relationship between the person with life-limiting conditions, the health care professional, the family and all the other agents of care involved with the person and the family in order to develop an individualised and coherent plan of care to assist the person and the family to attain realistic goals and outcomes in all care settings
- Collaborate effectively with others as a member or leader of multidisciplinary team
- Be able to identify priorities or concerns for the individual with a life-limiting condition and their carers, taking account of the individual's coping strategies and how the person perceives their diagnosis
- In the context of professional scope of practice be able to critically evaluate outcomes of interventions against established standards and guidelines
- Demonstrate an understanding of advance care planning and an appreciation of the appropriate time(s) to engage in discussions about preferences for care with the person with a life-limiting condition and her/his family
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate sensitively and clearly about advance care planning with the person, the family and the range of professionals and agencies involved

ALL

As a Chaplain you should:

- Demonstrate an ability to assess, plan and communicate the spiritual needs of the patient to the multidisciplinary team
- Be aware and respect professional boundaries when offering and providing spiritual care to patients and when interacting with other members of the multidisciplinary team
- Demonstrate an ability to assess the need to seek professional consultation regarding the effectiveness of pastoral care and the appropriateness of referral to another professional care provider
- Document appropriate referrals following spiritual assessment (e.g. referral to the patient's own faith representative if requested)
- Demonstrate an ability for effective engagement in multidisciplinary team meetings, highlighting and addressing spiritual issues and suggesting appropriate responses to identified spiritual need
- Work collaboratively with the person with a life-limiting condition, their family and other professionals, including attending family meetings, team meetings, mediating discussions and planning for future care.

- Recognise that the person with a life-limiting condition may lose capacity to make decisions towards end-of-life

SOME

As a Chaplain with an additional level of engagement with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Be able to facilitate and integrate collaborative processes and multidisciplinary relationships that respect the principles of holistic care within the wider health care institutional culture
- Demonstrate leadership in identifying spiritual/religious issues and facilitate the appropriate team response through family meetings involving other team members and services as appropriate
- Have the ability to articulate the unique professional role of chaplains as leaders in the provision of spiritual care
- Be able to quantify the benefits and measurable outcomes of pastoral care interventions through reflecting on expressed patient and family satisfaction

FEW

As a Chaplain working primarily with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Provide staff support and guidance around spiritual care issues by sharing professional knowledge and expertise regarding spiritual/religious issues in palliative care and at end of life, with the multidisciplinary team





DOMAIN OF COMPETENCE 5

LOSS, GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT

Dealing with loss, grief and bereavement for the person themselves, their family and the professionals who care for them is intrinsic to palliative care provision. Most people manage their loss by combining their own resources with support from family and friends. However, a minority of people are at risk of developing complications or difficulties in their grieving. Professionals using the palliative care approach have an important role to play in supporting bereaved people by providing information and support to all and by identifying those who require bereavement therapy or counselling.

INDICATORS

As a health care professional you should:

- Understand that grief is a normal and appropriate response to loss which has physical, psychological, spiritual, emotional and social aspects that affect how it is experienced
- Recognise the range of individual physical, psychological, spiritual, emotional and social responses to loss and grief
- Recognise the factors which may put a person at risk of encountering difficulties in their grief, whilst also remaining aware of the resources and resiliencies that are particular to each person and family
- Demonstrate an ability to engage with a person who is experiencing loss in the context of professional scope of practice and/or role
- Assist the family to access bereavement information and support at a level that is appropriate to their needs
- Understand the personal impact of loss, grief and bereavement and recognise your own loss responses and engage in activities that maintain your resilience on an on-going basis
- Possess a level of self-awareness that prevents your own experiences of loss from negatively impacting on the person with a life-limiting condition or their family.

ALL

As a Chaplain you should:

- Be able to articulate important spiritual, existential and emotional concepts for patients, families and significant others
- Work in partnership with parents, guardians and other family members in order to prepare and support children and vulnerable adults for the loss of loved ones
- Be able to provide appropriate spiritual care and emotional support to grieving persons of diverse cultural and religious traditions, and to persons with no affiliation to a faith tradition
- Be able to plan and lead appropriate rituals, suitable for the time of dying or after death, which offer hope and comfort to persons from a diversity of cultural and faith traditions, and to persons who represent a diversity of world views
- Be able to plan and lead services suitable for specific faith traditions, and also ecumenical and interfaith services
- Demonstrate an ability to work in partnership with the patient's faith group/leaders and/or other community religious/spiritual and cultural resources to ensure that all sacramental, religious and faith based rituals are met in a timely and appropriate manner

SOME

As a Chaplain with an additional level of engagement with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the theories of loss, grief and bereavement
- Be culturally aware of nuances regarding pain, suffering, loss, complicated and anticipatory grief, and life review
- In the context of your current role as an ordained chaplain and appropriate to the faith tradition of the individual with a life-limiting condition, celebrate Mass and the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick, Reconciliation and others as required
- In the context of your current role as an ordained chaplain and appropriate to the faith tradition of the individual with a life-limiting condition ensure faith based rituals, sacraments and ministry are met in a timely and appropriate manner
- In the context of your role as a Rabbi and appropriate to the faith tradition of the individual with a life-limiting condition ensure faith based rites and rituals are met in a timely and appropriate manner
- In the context of your role as an Imam and appropriate to the faith tradition of the individual with a life-limiting condition ensure faith based rituals are met in a timely and appropriate manner
- In the context of your role as Asacharya and appropriate to the faith tradition of the individual with a life-limiting condition ensure faith based rituals are met in a timely and appropriate manner
- In the context of your role as Sensei and appropriate to the faith tradition of the individual with a life-limiting condition ensure faith based rituals are met in a timely and appropriate manner

FEW

As a Chaplain working primarily with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Provide multidisciplinary team debriefing and support the development of self-care strategies for colleagues working in end of life care.





DOMAIN OF COMPETENCE 6

PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF PALLIATIVE CARE

The goal of health care is to help people sustain health that is essential to their well-being. However, there comes a time when specific treatments or interventions may be futile or overly burdensome. Integrity in palliative care practice refers to the importance of respecting the person's values, needs and wishes in the context of a life-limiting condition. It guides all health care professionals to reflect on the relationship between their contribution to a person's care and the necessary contributions of other professionals. Professional and ethical practice is about considering how best to provide continuing and integrated care to people as their health care needs change in the course of life-limiting conditions.

INDICATORS

As a health care professional you should:

- Work within your current Code of Professional Conduct and engage ethically, knowledgeably and respectfully with other disciplines
- Recognise and respect your professional responsibility to care for people with life-limiting conditions and their families to ensure their comfort and dignity
- In the context of your current professional role establish collegial partnerships and in the context of palliative care contribute to the professional development of students, peers, colleagues and others through consultation, education, leadership, mentorship and coaching
- Use the resources available fairly in the context of providing appropriate care to the person with a life-limiting condition
- In the context of professional scope of practice and/or role anticipate and demonstrate the ability to address potential ethical issues that may be encountered when caring for the person with a life-limiting condition and her/his family such as: Do Not Attempt Resuscitation Orders, withdrawal and withholding of treatment, use of artificial hydration and feeding, palliative sedation and requests for euthanasia
- Be able to establish and respect people's wishes about their care and options/ preferences. This includes: Recognising people's right to make informed decisions to refuse additional treatment(s)
- Seek, respond to and implement the person's preferences about where they are cared for (e.g. in their own homes) if this is practicable
- Respecting advance care plans made by people where the decision is an informed choice and relates to the situation that has arisen (Medical Council, 2009)
- Demonstrate a commitment to engage in anti-discriminatory practice in relation to end of life care and service delivery

ALL

As a Chaplain you should:

- Respect and uphold the dignity of the person who is receiving palliative or end-of- life care.
- Respect and support the person with a life-limiting condition and their family to be treated with dignity throughout the course of illness, during the dying process, and after death.
- Identify how one's feelings, attitudes, values and assumptions impact on pastoral ministry with the person with a life-limiting condition and their family.
- To recognise and articulate challenging areas of ethical sensitivity and awareness in the hospice and palliative care arena.
- Demonstrate maintaining one's integrity and authenticity in professional practice during the process of assisting others in moral and ethical care decisions, within a diverse and transitioning health care system and patient population.
- Engage in reflective practice to promote greater self- awareness and ability to critically

evaluate one's own practice within end of life care.

- Utilise professional supervision to ensure best practice in end of life care and to meet organisational and professional requirements.

SOME

As a Chaplain with an additional level of engagement with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Participate in family meetings around ethical decision-making for patients and families honouring diverse ethnic, cultural, religious/faith tradition and philosophical world views.
- Demonstrate leadership through advocating for on-going and continuous service development
- Be able to facilitate the discussion and resolution of ethical issues that may arise in palliative care.

FEW

As a Chaplain working primarily with people with life-limiting conditions you should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the process of quality improvement in the context of palliative care
- Communicate and advance the distinct contribution of pastoral care to palliative care.
- Demonstrate a commitment to advancing Palliative Care through the generation and application of knowledge and research

