

The team is scared and uncertain about the future for patients, their own families, and themselves. You are scared and uncertain. Tensions, emotions, and stress are high.

The COVID-19 crisis is testing palliative care and all clinical teams with unprecedented numbers of patients, lack of or inconsistent information about quickly-changing policies, and rapid changes in roles and priorities. Leadership is critical during a crisis to stabilize and deliver quality care, but also to ensure the team and organization are thinking and planning beyond the crisis. CAPC has gathered and synthesized advice and tips from program leaders from across the country to help provide leadership guidance during COVID-19. (See also: CAPC's [Leading Through a Crisis: Quick References](#))

Leadership Action	Why it is Important	Tips
Communicate ... Communicate ... Communicate ...	Communication, early and often, builds trust and provides an opportunity for all members of the team to hear what leaders, the organization, or other team members are thinking or worrying about. Limited or lack of accurate information can create unnecessary uncertainty and stress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide time for the team to connect to share their own experiences and how they are coping • Share what you know and say “I don’t know but will find out” when you don’t • Be present and check in often. “What has you most worried?” “What can I do for you?”
Be at the table	Palliative care plays an important role in an organization’s response to COVID-19. Actively participating in rapid response task forces and other planning efforts provides an opportunity to influence, define the role of palliative care and gain insight you can share with the team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate on your organization’s COVID planning taskforce or group • Jointly plan responses and prioritize with key partners (ED, ICU, hospitalists, home health, hospice) • Avoid waiting for someone else to lead – “lean in” to the crisis and lead.
Take the long view	While someone needs to manage the tactics of responding to today’s crisis, the leader also needs to be thinking about tomorrow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to reflect on what is most important, not just what is urgent • Protect time off for the team - (this is a marathon not a sprint) • Don’t do it alone – collaborate, delegate, pace yourself and the team
Innovate and replicate	Crises create opportunities for rapid piloting and implementation of new ideas. It is important to quickly develop and disseminate new processes and train staff to ensure consistency in implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time to prioritize and pilot needed new processes (telehealth) • Maintain a log of new ideas and prioritize for now and the future • Identify a lead for new processes

“We remind ourselves daily of our purpose – to support patients and family caregivers.”
- Palliative care program leader