Comprehensive Palliative Care Skills for Medical Residents and Fellows

This Learning Pathway contains comprehensive clinical skills training to help medical residents and fellows improve quality of life for patients living with serious illness. Topics include an introduction to the principles and practices of palliative care, communication techniques for effective conversations with patients and caregivers, pain and symptom management, and safe opioid prescribing. This Pathway contains approximately 12 hours of learning activities.

Understanding Palliative Care

Introduction to Palliative Care

An introduction to palliative care, how it is delivered, its impact on quality of life, and the growing population of patients who need it.

CAPC Palliative Care Referral Criteria

Checklist of triggers for referral to a specialty palliative care team.

Communicating Effectively During Serious Illness

Delivering Serious News to Patients and Caregivers

Learn best practices for having patient-centered conversations about a serious illness diagnosis. These discussions are the foundation of building a trusting clinician-patient relationship.

Communicating Prognosis to Patients and Caregivers

Learn how to effectively discuss prognosis with patients and their caregivers to ensure understanding and set the context for decision-making.

Leading Goals of Care Conversations

Learn best practices for building trust, eliciting patient values, and having patient-centered conversations about goals of care.

Conducting Effective Patient and Caregiver Meetings

Learn to effectively lead conversations that address a range of concerns and emotions to help patients and caregivers become aligned around the patient's goals.

Care Planning Conversations

Learn techniques to help patients and their caregivers plan for the future, both during the early stages of a serious illness and as a disease progresses.

Goals of Care Conversation: Role Play

In this video, Kacey Boyle, RN, MSPC, leads us through an example of a goals of care conversation between a clinician and a patient.

"I Don't See Color" Means You Don't See Me

Why clinicians must unlearn well-intentioned but ultimately harmful conventions about race and ethnicity—and strategies to move forward.

Managing Pain Safely and Effectively

Course 1: Pain and its Impact on Our Patients

Learn to define and characterize pain, recognize the prevalence of pain, understand disparities in pain management based on race, ethnicity, and gender.

Course 2: How to Perform a Comprehensive Pain Assessment

Learn the components of a comprehensive pain assessment and its importance in safe and effective pain management.

Course 3: Matching Treatment to Pain Type

Gain an overview of pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic pain treatments, including risks and benefits, and learn how to match the analgesic to pain type.

Course 4: Prescribing an Opioid

Learn how to decide on an appropriate opioid, route of delivery, and dose, and understand how to prescribe for incident and breakthrough pain.

Course 5: Practice Prescribing an Opioid

Practice prescribing initial opioid doses for different pain types and characteristics. Learn to adjust dosing as needed to manage pain effectively.

Course 6: Creating a Pain Treatment Plan and Monitoring Effectiveness

Learn to develop a pain treatment plan with realistic goals and proper documentation, and implement universal precautions to help with the risk of opioid use disorder.

Course 8: Problems with Opioid Prescribing: Is it an Opioid Use Disorder?

Learn how to identify and diagnose opioid use disorder (OUD) and practice communicating with patients about OUD and pain management.

Prescribing Opioids: A Pocket Reference

Opioid pocket reference for providers including safe starting doses, equianalgesic chart, and standard dosing strengths.

Managing Common Symptoms

Anxiety

After completing this course, learners will be equipped with evidence-based strategies to identify and treat anxiety in patients living with a serious illness.

Constipation

Constipation occurs in at least 70% of patients living with a serious illness and often goes unrecognized. After completing this course, learners will have the tools to successfully identify and manage the impact of constipation.

Depression

After completing this course, learners will have the tools to accurately identify and treat depression in patients living with a serious illness.

Dyspnea

After completing this course, learners will have the tools they need to manage dyspnea, including the physical causes of shortness of breath and the emotional impact on the patient.

Nausea/Vomiting

Nausea and vomiting are common symptoms of serious illness and can cause dangerous complications. After completing this course, learners will be equipped with practical skills to identify, manage, and reduce these symptoms.

Preventing Avoidable Crises

Safe and Age-Friendly Care for Older Adults

This course provides context and best practices for identifying older adults at risk for poor outcomes, including falls, delirium, and caregiving challenges.

Supporting the Caregivers of People with Serious Illness

This course offers tools and guidance for assessing and addressing the needs of caregivers of people with serious illness.

Coordinating Care and Planning Ahead

Guidance for all clinicians on improving communication and ensuring smooth transitions of care for patients living with serious illness.

A Delirium Whodunit: Understanding the Causes of Delirium

This interactive whodunit game challenges learners to conduct a thorough clinical investigation of a patient with delirium to diagnose the cause(s).

Deprescribing Escape Room: Reducing Medication-Related Harm

This interactive escape room game challenges learners to conduct a thorough assessment of a patient whose multiple medications may be causing adverse effects, and determine which one(s) are candidates for deprescribing.

View this page online

You must be logged in to have full access to these resources. Not sure if you have a CAPC account? Check here to create one.