

Core Palliative Care Skills for Medical Students

This Learning Pathway contains training in core clinical skills to help medical students understand the needs of patients living with serious illness and how palliative care can help. Topics include an introduction to the principles and practices of palliative care, communication techniques for effective conversations with patients and caregivers, and pain management. This pathway contains approximately 3.5 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.

Communicating Effectively During Serious Illness

Discussing Serious News

Learn best practices for having patient-centered conversations about a serious illness diagnosis.

Clarifying Patient Goals of Care

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

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.

Preventing Avoidable Crises

Reducing Risks 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.

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