

# Registered Nursing Serious Illness Designation: Foundational Skills

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This Learning Pathway provides comprehensive online education in nursing practices to improve quality of life for patients living with serious illness. Nurses can use Serious Illness Designation to demonstrate expertise in working with this patient population.

## Assess the Needs and Concerns of Patients

### Introduction to Palliative Care for Health Professionals

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

### Revised Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS-r)

Assesses for nine symptoms experienced by patients with serious illness and quantifies their severity. Alberta Health Services.

### PHQ-4 Validated Screening Tool for Anxiety and Depression

Brief (4-question) screening tool for anxiety and depression.

### Social Needs Screen

Assessment tool and resource list to address social risk factors.

### FICA Spiritual Assessment Tool

Short conversation guide to elicit information about a patient's spiritual history and preferences.

### CAPC Palliative Care Referral Criteria

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

# Strengthen the Clinician-Patient Relationship and Understand Care Goals

## [Advance Care Planning Conversations](#)

How to initiate and conduct conversations about advance care planning.

## [The Role of the RN in Advance Care Planning](#)

A position statement from Hospice & Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA) is that healthcare decision-making is very personal and fluid. It is part of the nurse's role to advocate for the patient and family regarding their healthcare preferences.

## [Responding to Emotion: Vital Talk Quick Guide for Conversations](#)

Conversation framework and key phrases to share empathy and deepen your relationship with your patient. Vital Talk, 2019.

## [Clarifying Goals of Care](#)

Strategies for eliciting patient goals and preferences to inform treatment decisions.

## [Delivering Serious News](#)

Communicating serious clinical news to patients and families.

## [Unconscious Bias: What It Is, How It Influences Health Care, and What You Can Do About It](#)

Defines unconscious bias and how it influences patient care, and provides ways to reduce the impact of unconscious bias on care delivery.

## [Talking with Patients About Hospice](#)

This resource lists step-wise tips to foster comfortable, productive dialogue for 'the hospice conversation'.

# Manage Pain and Symptoms

## [Course 3: Patient Factors that Influence Prescribing Decisions](#)

Patient and family factors that influence prescribing decisions for patients with serious illness.

## [Course 8: Monitoring for Opioid Efficacy, Side Effects, and Substance Use Disorder](#)

Ongoing evaluation of opioid benefits, risks, and side effects for the patient with serious illness.

## [Dyspnea in Patients with Serious Illness](#)

Take this online course to learn how to manage dyspnea, including the physical causes of shortness of breath and the emotional impact on the patient.

### **Nausea and Vomiting in Patients with Serious Illness**

Nausea and vomiting are common symptoms of serious illness, and can cause dangerous complications. Take this online course to learn practical skills to identify, manage, and reduce these symptoms.

### **Constipation in Patients with Serious Illness**

Constipation occurs in at least 70% of patients living with a serious illness and often goes unrecognized. Take this online course to learn critical skills to identify and manage the impact of constipation.

### **Anxiety in Patients with Serious Illness**

Take this online course to learn evidence-based strategies to identify and treat anxiety in patients with a serious illness.

### **Depression in Patients with Serious Illness**

This online course teaches how to accurately identify and treat depression in patients living with a serious illness.

### **Cognitive Assessment Tools**

Recommended validated cognitive assessment tools.

## **Prevent Crises and Help Patients Plan Ahead**

### **Supporting Patients with Serious Illness to Plan Ahead**

Considerations for clinicians, patients, and families upon diagnosis, including advance care planning, personal care needs, legal and financial planning, work and retirement planning, and prevention of common medical risks.

### **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.

### **FindHelp.org**

National database of community services - enter a zip code and locate assistance with food, housing, health services, care needs, and other resources.

### **Psychosocial Assessment for Patients with Serious Illness**

Assessment questions to help nurses understand the impact of serious illness on a patient's relationships, social and spiritual supports, financial stability, and trust in the health care system. Fast Facts, April 2020

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