Social Work Serious Illness Designation: Foundational Skills

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

Assess the Needs and Concerns of Patients

**PHQ-4 Validated Screening Tool for Anxiety and Depression**
Brief (4-question) screening tool for anxiety and depression.

**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

**Social Needs Screen**
Assessment tool and resource list to address social risk factors.

**Zarit Burden Interview (ZBI-12)**
Self-reported caregiver assessment.

**An In-Depth Look at Palliative Care and Its Services**
Defining palliative care, which patients need it, how it is delivered, and how palliative care differs from hospice.

**CAPC Palliative Care Referral Criteria**
Checklist of triggers for referral to a specialty palliative care team.

Center to Advance Palliative Care | capc.org/training/learning-pathways/
Strengthen the Clinician-Patient Relationship and Understand Care Goals

**Advance Care Planning Conversations**
How to initiate and conduct conversations about advance care planning.

**Clarifying Goals of Care**
Strategies for eliciting patient goals and preferences to inform treatment decisions.

**Communication Phrases in Palliative Care**
Phrases to use when talking to members/patients and their families about prognosis, advance planning, and quality of life.

**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 1: Comprehensive Pain Assessment**
Conducting a comprehensive pain assessment to guide safe and effective treatment.

**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.
Supporting the Family Caregiver: The Burden of Serious Illness
Assessing and supporting caregivers of people with serious illness.

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