

# TEACHING THE HAND THAT TOUCHES THE PATIENT

Teaching Professional Carers using a Standardised Framework

## AUTHORS

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## BACKGROUND

This project was undertaken at Ardgowan Hospice, an independent hospice in the West of Scotland, serving a population of 76,000 people. (1) As the senior community nurse specialists, we identified that there were eight carers dedicated to providing end-of-life care, employed by the local health and social care partnership. These carers did not receive any formal specialised training related to end-of-life care for this role.

## OBJECTIVES

To standardise the training professional carers dedicated to providing end-of-life care in Inverclyde receive to improve the quality of care they provide

## METHOD

- We carried out a learning needs analysis with the professional carers providing end-of-life-care.
- We designed a six-week programme based on a framework for health and social care professional education in palliative and end of life care developed by NHS Education for Scotland (NES). (Figure 1)
- The framework has five domains to help support our teaching: discussing fundamentals of palliative care, communication, grief and bereavement, care planning and care in the last days of life.
- We provided initial training in the use of Palliative Performance Scale (PPS) to improve interprofessional communication.
- The sessions also included education around challenging communication scenarios, and participants were encouraged to share their real-life experiences and invited to reflect on them with guidance from facilitators.



Figure 1: NHS Education for Scotland Palliative and End of Life Framework (2)

## RESULTS

We gathered qualitative feedback from the professional carers who participated in this programme. Overall, feedback was positive.

**I feel more confident dealing with palliative care issues throughout my job.**

**I didn't realise how much there was to it (end-of-life-care).**

**I enjoyed information on how to communicate with service users and their families.**

**I enjoyed (learning) how to use (palliative) performance scale and how this will help improve our communication.**

## REFLECTIONS

- This programme improved the professional carers' insight into their level of expertise.
- It was really useful to build relationships with this group of healthcare professionals - bodes well for future collaboration.
- We are now keen to offer this programme on an annual basis given the positive feedback, potentially with different formats for new staff and staff who have previously undergone the training

## POSITIVE IMPACT

- The hospice team received a phone call via the HCP Helpline several weeks later from a professional carer who had attended the programme.
- The professional carer clearly communicated how a patient was declining at home and triggered an appropriate review by our team.
- This resulted in a home visit from a member of the Community team and subsequent admission to hospice inpatient unit

**THIS PATIENT'S PERFORMANCE SCALE HAS DROPPED.**

## CONCLUSION

Different professions working collaboratively throughout health and social care has enhanced the palliative care delivered throughout the community. This project integrates well with parallel projects at the hospice, including the introduction of a healthcare professional advice line.

## REFERENCES

1. www.nrscotland.gov.uk. (n.d.). Inverclyde Council Area Profile. [online] Available at: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/inverclyde-council-profile.html>.
2. NHS Education for Scotland (n.d.). Palliative and end of life care : enriching and improving experience. [online] Turas Learn. NHS Education for Scotland . Available at: <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/2450/palliative-and-end-of-life-care-enriching-and-improving-experience> [Accessed 6 Oct. 2023].