Culturally Sensitive Palliative Care
Part II: Team Approach

Amy Wilson, RN, BSN, CHPN
Marquette General Home Health and Hospice
Escanaba, MI
• Geriatric Education Center of Michigan activities are supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Public Health Service Act, Title VII, Section 753(a).
Learning Objectives

• Identify cultural sensitivities that may exist in selected cultures (American Indian, African American, Hispanic, Asian, Middle Eastern)

• Develop effective communication techniques to utilize in the discussion of palliative care with older adults and their caregivers.

• Describe effective strategies used by interdisciplinary teams to develop mutually agreed-upon, culturally sensitive care plans.
Culturally Sensitive Palliative Care is...

The care of a person who is living with a progressive, far-advanced disease for whom the focus of care is comfort and sustained quality of life ...
Palliative Care

- Person-oriented – not disease oriented
- Not primarily concerned with life prolongation (nor with life shortening)
- Not primarily concerned with producing long-term disease remission
- Holistic in approach and aims to address all the client’s problems, both physical and psychosocial
Palliative Care

- Multidisciplinary/interprofessional in its approach to cover all aspects of care
- Dedicated to the quality of whatever life remains for a person
- Not limited to just people living with cancer
Culturally Sensitive Palliative Care includes an awareness of a person’s culture ...

- The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious or social group

- The characteristics of everyday existence (a way of life) shared by people in a place or time
Culturally Sensitive Palliative Care realizes that culture is ...

- Influenced by technology & resources
- Generally unexpressed and rarely discussed at a conscious level
- Influenced by the role changes of women
- Handed down from one generation to another within their value/beliefs systems
Culturally Sensitive Palliative Care realizes that **culture** is ...

- Learned from birth through language and socialization
- Dynamic and always in a state of change
- Adopts in an ongoing way to the environment, social and historical context
Culturally Sensitive Palliative Care is also mindful that, for a person’s well-being, ...

- Culture, spirituality and health are inextricably intertwined
- Culture, spirituality and health are not separate components
Culturally Sensitive Palliative Care is also mindful that, for a person’s well-being, (cont.) ...

***Special Note:

- All people of particular culture do not agree to a common cultural pattern of responses.
- Cultures do change over time.
Patient Rights and Responsibilities
Relational Care

Patient rights encompass legal and ethical issues in the provider-patient relationship, including the patient's right to privacy, the right to quality medical care without prejudice, the right to make informed decisions about care and treatment options, and the right to refuse treatment.
Effective Communication Strategies ...

- Communicate and watch for:
  - A person’s personal preference: cultural, spiritual, religious
  - Body language and other non-verbal communication
  - Assumptions about those you serve – ask ‘them’ about their culture/traditions
Effective Communication Strategies ... 

- Be Attentive:
  - Avoid cultural ignorance and hurtful actions
  - Provide culturally appropriate health promotion materials
  - Understand the ‘kinship’ web, including family members and extended members in the circle of care
Cultural Sensitivity
~American Indian~

- Be attentive to concepts of personal insight, individual awareness, and self-actualization
- Family and community is of great importance in healing and illness prevention
- Understand the communal effect of traumatic experiences
Cultural Sensitivity
~American Indian~

- Understand and respect tribal practices and health belief systems
  
  [prayer, chanting, music, smudging, herbalism, laying on of hands, counseling, and rituals, ceremonies]

- Be sensitive to the use of direct eye contact

- Touch may be prohibited unless there is an established trust
Cultural Sensitivity
~American Indian~

- Speak in a quiet tone of voice
- Collaborate with traditional healing practices in the Plan of Care
- Listen and respond appropriately to the community members
Cultural Sensitivity
~American Indian~

- Move at ‘their’ pace
- Seek empowerment of the patient so that he/she is self-reliant
Cultural Sensitivity
~American Indian~

- Pay close attention to body language and other nonverbal communication
- Avoid assumptions about patients and ask about his/her beliefs
- Provide culturally appropriate health promotional materials
- Coordinate care with ‘traditional’ healers within the kinship of relationships
Cultural Sensitivity

~Hispanic~

- Hispanics initially seek traditional healers
- Physician skill is viewed as God’s power
- Culture views health and disease from a holistic perspective
- Religion has a major influence on the health beliefs and practices
- Curanderos (older community women) serve as health practitioners as well as health information providers
Cultural Sensitivity

~Asian~

- Culture is patrilineal and the community is valued over the individual.
- Family includes both living and dead relatives.
- Belief in ancestral communication through natural/animal medians.
- Views life from a holistic approach.
Group harmony, support and well-being is highly valued in community [interdependence and in perfect order]

Young seek mentor/elder who protects and guides them away from misfortune or erroneous ways

Respect those in authority [i.e., Healthcare Providers]
Cultural Sensitivity ~Middle Eastern~

- Privacy is valued and disclosure of personal information is resisted
- Nonverbal cues are more common than overt verbal exchange
- Predestination is core in their belief system, such as events are already pre-recorded
- Family is patriarchal, hierarchical and traditional
Appraise Individual/Personal Knowledge

As Health Care Professionals:

✓ Be aware of and accepting of cultural differences
✓ Have self-awareness of own culture/traditions
✓ Seek to learn and to understand another’s culture
✓ Provide holisitic care to the whole **UNIT OF CARE** [physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, social]
My knowledge and attitude will impact my approach to culturally sensitive care ...
References & Resources


References & Resources


References & Resources


References & Resources

National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization
http://www.nhpco.org/templates/1/homepage.cfm
