

NC Department of Health and Human Services  
**NC Home Care Aide Curriculum**  
  
Module 22 – End of Life Care  
  
July 2021

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**OBJECTIVES**

1. Explain the concept of and criteria for hospice care
2. Describe the home care aide's role in providing care to the dying patient
3. Discuss the home care aide's role in working with the patient's family
4. Explain how cultural diversity relates to end of life care

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**MODULE 22-A**

**Hospice Care**

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### What is Hospice?

- Hospice care is a concept or philosophy of care that focuses on patient comfort and quality of life rather than curing the patient's disease.



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### Hospice Statistics



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### Guidelines for Hospice

- Guidelines for hospice admission depend on expected life span.
- Palliative care must be desired over curative care.
- Progression of disease must be documented.



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**Cancer and Hospice**

- The top cancer diagnoses seen in hospice are:
  - Lung
  - Colorectal
  - Pancreatic
  - Breast
  - Prostate
  - Liver and intrahepatic bile duct



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**Non-Cancer Diagnoses & Hospice**

- Non-cancer diagnoses are accounting for more and more patients in hospice care.



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MODULE 22-B

THE HOME CARE AIDE'S ROLE IN PROVIDING CARE TO THE DYING PATIENT

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**The Dying Process**

The dying process can include:

- Physical weakness/lack of energy
- Increased sleep
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty swallowing
- Confusion
- Restlessness
- Incontinence
- Body temperature changes
- Breathing changes
- Increased energy

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**Emotional and Spiritual Support**

- Offer emotional and spiritual support for the patient and the family during this time.



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**ACTIVITY #1**

**The Dying Patient's Bill of Rights**



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**The Home Care Aide's Role**

- Much of the same care provided to other patients may be listed on the care plan for your patient as well.



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**Special Skills for the Home Care Aide (1)**

- Be a good listener
- Respect privacy and independence
- Be sensitive to individual needs
- Be aware of your own feelings and beliefs
- Understand the shift from quality of life to the quality of death
- Work as a team

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**Special Skills for the Home Care Aide (2)**

- Communicate with other staff.
- Make sure the patient's final journey is as peaceful as possible.
- Offer comfort and support to family.
- Care for yourself, recognize your feelings and take time to reflect.



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**Tips For The Home Care Aide**

- Handout #1 – Communicating with seriously ill patients
- Handout #2 – Talking with dying patients
- Handout #3 – What should you report



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**MODULE 22-C**

**THE HOME CARE AIDE'S ROLE IN WORKING WITH THE PATIENT'S FAMILY**

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**GRIEVING**

- Patient and family grief



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### STAGES OF GRIEF

**Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross outlined five (5) basic stages of grief:**

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance



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### SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY

- The family will look to you for help
- Be sure to report any signs of caregiver burnout to your supervisor



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### More Tips For The Home Care Aide

- Handout #4 – What to do when a patient dies at home
- Handout #5 – Providing emotional support to the family



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**MODULE 22-D**

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY RELATED TO  
END OF LIFE CARE**

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**CULTURE**

- What is culture?



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**CULTURE and ETHNICITY COMPARED**

- Culture vs. Ethnicity



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### Culture, Religion, and Spirituality

- Culture: assumptions, values, and tangible signs or artifacts that outline a group's organization and their behaviors
- Religion: adherence to an organized set of beliefs
- Spirituality: a person's perception of his/her reason for being



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### Being Culturally Sensitive

- Why is it important to learn about culture, ethnicity, and/or religion?



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### Differing Beliefs

- What do you do when your beliefs are different than your patient's?



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**More Tips For The Home Care Aide**

- Handout #6 – Respecting patient and family cultural beliefs



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Working with patients with terminal illnesses can be exhausting and draining, but it can also be rewarding and fulfilling. Be aware that you are present during one of the most significant times in that patient's life, and the family of the patient may also be going through a variety of emotions. Being sensitive, observant, and supportive will never be needed more than at this time.

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