

Tips for Nurses: Talking within the Aged Care Team



What it is: Talking with members of the care team taking care of an older person. The team caring for a person with palliative care needs may include people with different skills including nurses, carers, GPs, allied health, and spiritual care practitioners.

Why it matters: Good communication between care workers and other staff helps the quality of palliative care provided to clients or residents. It means everyone knows what to do and why. It also helps people to feel confident that staff know and understand what to do, and that they are providing appropriate care. The nurse has a leadership role within the team.

What I need to know: Often the Registered Nurse (RN) will pass information between team members, management, the older person and their family.

Effective communication is:

- open, honest, accurate
- respectful and sensitive
- may be formal (team meetings) or informal (casual meetings in the work area or staff room).

Written records are a common way for teams to communicate.

Effective communication:

- supports understanding between the sender and receiver of information
- is part of good teamwork.

Technology including electronic care records, email communication, telehealth meetings, and social media are changing the way people communicate. These new technologies need to be used carefully and in line with policies at your organisation.

Actions

Case conferences are one way to share information among the care team members.

If organising a case conference document notes on the discussions and any decisions made.

Provide staff with tools to facilitate and document case conferences. This might include an invitation and questionnaire for families, and planning checklists and communication sheets for staff.

Support all staff involved in the care of a person to talk with the team and to share the information they have about the person.

Seeking advice from or observing more experienced colleagues communicate is one way to improve communication skills.

Name:

My reflections:

Improved team communication may lead to more effective care, better outcomes for the older person and greater staff satisfaction. How is information about a person being cared for communicated within care teams in my organisation?

My notes:

See related palliAGED Practice
Tip Sheets:
Case Conferences
Continuity of Care
Talking about Dying

References used to develop this sheet are available at
www.palliaged.com.au