

Welcome to PACE for PSWs

PACE for PSWs offers a variety of learning options to meet your needs:

1. Enrol in the 10-course PACE for PSWs Program to earn a National Certification in Palliative Care from the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, Hospice Palliative Care Ontario and Life and Death Matters. The fee for the PACE for PSWs National Certificate Program is \$225 + HST.
2. Enrol in one or more single courses. The fee for single course is \$50 + HST.

PACE for PSWs National Certificate Program

Enrolling in the PACE for PSWs Program will help you to build skills in providing palliative care, develop best practices for communicating, understand ways to support cultural safety, and integrate a palliative approach for any person experiencing life-limiting illness.

The courses are written specifically for PSWs, HCAs, CCAs and nursing assistants to support them to provide palliative care competently and with confidence!

The PACE for PSWs National Certificate Program includes 10 required courses and takes approximately 30 hours to complete. Learners will be awarded a PACE for PSWs Program Certificate upon completion of all required 10 courses with a grade of 70% or greater.

Registrants in PACE for PSWs will:

- Understand the common patterns of dying and how these patterns affect the needs of the dying person and their family.
- Develop ways to communicate, show empathy, and share information.
- Build self-awareness and learn to maintain therapeutic boundaries.
- Learn ways to support dignity and provide compassionate care.
- Improve skills to gather information about symptoms and ways to prevent and respond to symptoms.
- Develop strategies to support cultural safety and provide care with a trauma-informed approach.
- Learn ways to support a person through loss, grief, dying and death, and for the family – through bereavement.
- Be able to contribute more effectively as a full member of the health care team.

Required Courses

Click the course title to learn more:

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How to Get Started

Visit <https://paceforpsws.ca/register>

STEP 1: Create an account

- Fill out the registration form.

STEP 2: Activate your account

- Check your email inbox for an account activation email.
- Click the link in the email and your account will be activated.

Don't see the email? Check your junk or spam folder.

STEP 3: [Login](#) and [enrol](#) in the full PACE for PSWs Program or enrol in a single course.

Course 1. "I don't know what to say" Preparing to Care, Communicate and Connect

Develop the skills you need to be self-aware and for communicating when providing hospice and palliative care

In this course, students will learn how to communicate and connect in ways that honour and respect a dying person and their family; develop self-awareness and a deeper understanding of their beliefs, values, and cultural view; explore and learn the best practices for communicating and connecting in palliative care, so that you can better know what to say when providing care; and discover what you might be saying that may prevent a person from sharing what they are feeling or they need.

Course Overview

Learn about the PSW's role as a caregiver in the journey of a dying person. Develop self-awareness and understanding of your beliefs, values, and your cultural view and learn how to set aside beliefs, values and so on, that you do not bring them with you as a caregiver, enabling you to build trust and develop healthy care-giving relationships. Explore best practices for communicating and connecting in palliative care to support a person's dignity and honour, and develop compassionate care-giving relationships that build trust and respect. Learn ways to communicate so that you will be able to better understand what is helpful and what is less helpful to say.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Practice self-reflection to identify beliefs, values and opinions about dying and death.
- Identify ways that personal "baggage" can interfere with providing person-centred care.
- Explain how your world view can communicate respect and support dignity for all people.
- Demonstrate ways to connect and communicate to provide emotional and spiritual support to the person and family.
- Understand your instrumental role in listening and sharing information appropriately when a person discusses advance care plans or care wishes.
- Provide empathetic and compassionate "ways of being" to provide emotional and spiritual support to the person and family.
- Identify and understand how to avoid roadblocks to communication.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents
2. A writing journal or notebook for writing reflections and course notes.

Course 2. Integrating a Palliative Approach to Support People as They Live and Die

What does it mean to integrate a palliative approach?

Discover the dramatic changes in dying over the past 100 years - changes that resolve dying into four common patterns and affect how care is now provided. As you learn the principles for providing palliative care, you'll develop your understanding of why some people may struggle to access palliative and end-of-life care.

Help to increase access by empowering yourself with the knowledge and skills for integrating a palliative approach into the care of any person with a life-limiting illness, in any care setting.

Course Overview

Unprecedented! We have never died like this before! Learn how dying has changed in the past century, and how palliative care emerged as a way to provide better care for dying people. Understand why it can be helpful to know the common patterns of decline, and the challenges of each decline for the person, family and caregivers. Learn the principles of palliative care and the barriers people may experience that prevent them from accessing palliative care. Build your understanding of how to integrate a palliative approach to support any dying person with a life limiting illness, in any care setting.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Discuss changes in the way people die, and the way dying people are cared for, over the past 100 years.
- Explain Dame Saunders' role in developing palliative care.
- Identify the four common patterns of decline, and the challenges of each decline for the person and family.
- Explain the principles of palliative care and how to apply them in your practice.
- Understand barriers to accessing and receiving palliative care.
- Discuss ways that a palliative approach increases access to palliative services.
- Identify ways to integrate a palliative approach when providing care.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents
2. A writing journal or notebook for writing reflections and course notes.
3. Recommended internet browser: Google Chrome

Course 3. Being with' and 'ways of being': Boundaries and the Family Dance

The "family dance" is an easy-to-use model for understanding the role of therapeutic boundaries in caregiving relationships.

Using this model and the captivating podcasts from [Elizabeth Causton](#) you will learn how to develop your therapeutic boundaries, how to identify unclear boundaries and ways to maintain boundaries when providing care. Understand the challenges of providing care in a smaller community, when you may be a friend/family member as well as the member of the health care team. Learn practical skills and phrases for working with boundaries and providing compassionate care.

Course Overview

Understand the benefits of therapeutic boundaries for PSWs providing palliative and end-of-life care. Through the model of the family dance, learn to recognize when boundaries are not clear and develop skills to maintain healthy boundaries. Learners will benefit from practical strategies for working in smaller Indigenous communities in a dual role and will understand why boundaries are essential when working with team. Learn how PSWs may be the first to know about changes to a person's advance care plans, and how they can best collaborate with team by advocating for the person's wishes.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Define "therapeutic boundaries" and identify the benefits of maintaining therapeutic boundaries.
- Explain the metaphor of the "family dance" in terms of therapeutic boundaries, crossing, signs, and hooks.
- Explain how to maintain therapeutic boundaries and recognize signs that indicate boundaries are clear.
- Describe strategies for maintaining therapeutic boundaries when working in health care and working in small communities.
- Identify phrases to use that explain your relationship with the person and family.
- Explain the PSW's role on team and why boundaries are essential when working on team.
- Describe strategies for collaborating with team.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents
2. A writing journal or notebook for writing reflections and course notes.

Course 4. Supporting Physical Comfort: Part 1 - Tools, Medications and Pain

Build valuable skills in gathering and sharing information as you learn how to support physical comfort for a person with life-limiting illness.

Understand how to use standardized tools for gathering information and communicating with the team. Learn principles for using medications in palliative care and understand why opioid medications are essential medications used in palliative care.

Understand the common fears about using opioids, and ways to help manage the side effects of opioids. Pull it all together as you learn how to support a person experiencing pain as they decline and die.

Course Overview

PSWs are vital to providing care for people with life-limiting illnesses, as they decline and die. Discover the guidelines, (the principles) for supporting physical comfort and for using medications, including opioids, to manage symptoms. You will be prepared to gather and share information with the team after learning how to use standardized tools for gathering, recording and reporting information. The common symptom, pain, is explored and PSWs have the opportunity to apply their learning about supporting physical comfort to gather information, record and report.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Use the following standardized tools to gather and communicate information about a person's health status to the nurse and team: Palliative Performance Scale (PPS), Edmonton Symptom Assessment Scale (ESAS), Symptom Framework for PSWs, and SBAR.
- Explain the principles for supporting comfort and for using medications to manage symptoms.
- Explain how opioid, non-opioid, and adjuvant medications support comfort.
- Identify the PSW's unique position on the care team that makes it most likely PSWs will be first to notice changes in a person's health.
- Demonstrate how to communicate changes in a person's health to the care team and to advocate for the person's care wishes and the need for serious illness conversations.
- Discuss the PSW's responsibility for being informed about a person's advance care plans and care wishes. Demonstrate ways to advocate for the incorporation of a person's and their designated family or caregivers' values and beliefs into the care plan.
- Using the Symptom Framework for PSWs, ask about the person's understanding and their values regarding a symptom, and contribute this information to the person's care plan and advance care plan.
- Use best practice skills of listening, pausing, asking open-ended questions, and avoiding roadblocks to communication to create an encouraging and supportive environment for a person to share information about their care wishes.

- For the symptom pain, explain causes of pain, gather information about a person's pain, communicate information to the team, help to manage pain using preventive measures and support the family when a person is experiencing pain.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents
2. A writing journal or notebook for writing reflections and course notes.

Course 5. Supporting Physical Comfort: Part 2

"PSWs are often called the eyes and the ears of the health care team."

This course discusses the common symptoms of dyspnea, anorexia and cachexia, nausea and vomiting, and delirium, and the ways that PSWs can support the comfort of a person experiencing a symptom.

In this course, you will build on your skills for using standardized tools while learning about these common symptoms, the causes, medications, treatments and comfort measures. Through the course, you will build skills in communicating with the team and advocating for the person's care wishes.

Course Overview

PSWs are often considered the eyes, the ears and the hands of the health care team - and so it make sense that PSWs are usually the first to notice changes or a new symptom. This course provides all the tools, tips and comfort measures for supporting a person experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Dyspnea
- Anorexia and cachexia
- Nausea and vomiting
- Delirium

Learn to recognize these symptoms, gather information, record and report to the team. Develop skills in communicating and collaborating with the team to support a person's comfort. Develop your ability to support a person's care wishes, and advocate for their beliefs and values in care planning.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Explain the PSW's unique position on the care team, that makes it most likely PSWs will first notice changes in a person's health.
- Understand that PSWs noting any change in the person's health must communicate this to the team and that this information should trigger an essential conversation about the person's wishes.
- Discuss the PSWs responsibility for being informed about a person's advance care plans and care wishes.
- Demonstrate ways to advocate for the incorporation of people's and their designated family or caregivers' values and beliefs into the care plan.
- Using the Symptom Framework for PSWs, ask about the person's understanding and their values regarding the symptom, and contribute this information to the person's care plan and advance care plan.
- Use best practice skills of listening, pausing, asking open-ended questions, and avoiding roadblocks to communication to create an encouraging and supportive environment for a person to share information about their care wishes.

- For each of the following symptoms - dyspnea, anorexia, cachexia, nausea, vomiting, delirium, be able to describe the symptom, gather information, communicate with the team, help manage the symptom with comfort measures and support the family.

Resources

In this course, you will need:

1. Access to a printer
2. Three (3) disposable straws for a learning activity
3. A writing journal or book for taking notes and writings.

Course 6. Caring for Yourself While You Care for Others

Caregiving, especially when working with a person who is dying and their family, has the potential to exhaust a caregiver. The course explores the different domains of self-care and helps you to determine the best self-care practices to care for you. In addition to developing an individualized self-care plan, you will also prepare an advanced care plan.

Course Overview

The evidence is in - health care providers need to protect themselves from the negative effects of providing care. Understand the role of resilience in everyday life, and use tools to evaluate how you are taking care of you and your level of compassion fatigue. Build a self-care plan that is tailored to meet your needs, interests and abilities. Finally, complete an advance care plan so that your care needs will be met, should the time come when you are no longer able to speak for yourself.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Explain the concept of compassion fatigue and the reasons why health care providers are specifically susceptible to compassion fatigue.
- Define the terms resilience, and self-compassion as they relate to PSWs working in palliative and end-of-life care.
- Self-identify your level of compassion fatigue.
- Develop a workable maintenance self-care plan that draws upon the multiple components of self-care activities.
- Identify an advance care plan for yourself in case of injury or accident.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents.
2. A writing journal or book for taking notes and writings.

Course 7. Providing Culturally Safe Care with an Indigenous Lens

Explore the history of Indigenous people in Canada and the role of colonialism in marginalizing Indigenous people and their access to health care.

Course Overview

Learn strategies for providing culturally safer care with a trauma informed approach including implementing Calls to Action for health care from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and using the concept of two-eyed seeing.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Explain who the Indigenous, Metis, and Inuit people of Canada are, where they live and the challenges they face in accessing health care services.
- Identify the negative effects of the Indian Act, colonialism, residential schools, racism, and bias on the Indigenous peoples of Canada.
- Identify the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action for health care and explain ways the PSW can enact these in their practice.
- Identify strategies for providing culturally safer palliative care for an Indigenous person or a person from any different culture.
- Explain how to provide palliative care with a trauma-informed approach for any person with a life-limiting illness.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents
2. A writing journal or notebook for writing reflections and course notes.

Course 8. Providing Psychosocial Care: Part 1

Develop your understanding of psychosocial care

Course Overview

Palliative care is holistic care - which means it supports all aspects of a person. It's more than just physical care.

Develop ways to maintain a psychosocial perspective when providing care, using the VERS strategy. Learn about common transitions during decline, and ways to provide psychosocial support for the person and family. Build skills in supporting the person and family through the decline of dementia.

Learn the essential role of the PSW in supporting advance care planning.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Demonstrate how to holistically support the psychosocial needs of the dying person and family.
- Demonstrate how to support the person and family through transitions in decline.
- Explain the terms and concepts: advance care planning, serious illness conversations, and substitute decision maker.
- Discuss how to support the dying person's wishes through to death by integrating a palliative approach and through understanding of the PSWs role in advance care planning.
- Explain the role of advance care planning in Indigenous communities and ways to support a person wishing to create an advance care plan.
- Demonstrate ways to advocate for the incorporation of the values and beliefs of the person and their designated family into the care plan.
- Discuss the challenges for the person and family when their loved one is dying with dementia.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents
2. A writing journal or notebook for writing reflections and course notes.

Course 9. Providing Psychosocial Care: Part 2 - Loss and Grief

Loss and grief are prominent features of the psychosocial landscape when a person is dying. PSWs will learn the essential truths about loss and grief and engage in reflections on a personal experience to anchor their new understandings of loss and grief. Learners build practical skills for providing compassionate comfort for a grieving person, including ways to communicate that convey support and understanding. In the section on children and grief, PSWs learn how children differ in their grieving and common concerns, and understand ways for supporting grieving children. In the final module, students explore their own beliefs about MAID and learn ways to respond to a person interested in MAID or requesting MAID.

Course Overview

In this course, Providing Psychosocial Care - Part 2: Loss and Grief, students explore a loss and a time they experienced grief to set the groundwork for their understanding. Learning the basic truths about loss, and why grief is considered a whole person experience provides the background knowledge for developing the practical skills for supporting a grieving person and family. Exploring the differences in how children grieve, their concerns and strategies for supporting children prepares PSWs for supporting parents. An exploration of the PSW's role in responding to requests for MAID involves a personal reflection on beliefs about MAID and learning the practical communication skills for responding and sharing information with the team.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Explain the basic truths about loss.
- Discuss how grieving is a whole person experience and how this understanding can help the care team to support a grieving person.
- Identify the role of integrating a palliative approach and advance care planning in facilitating ways to support a grieving person.
- Explain how people grieve in different ways.
- Demonstrate ways to support people as they grieve.
- Discuss how to support and communicate with children experiencing losses and grief.
- Identify your beliefs about Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) and demonstrate ways to respond when a person is interested in or requests Medical Assistance in Dying.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents
2. A writing journal or notebook for writing reflections and course notes.

Course 10. Last Days and Hours

The last days and hours of a person's life are precious - to the person and their family. This course will help you as you provide care and support in the last days and hours. Build your understanding of care needs by learning about common physical changes in the last days and hours and ways to support the person's physical comfort. Understand the psychosocial implications of the changes for the family and how to support them. Learn how to care for a body after death, and ways to support a family to be with their deceased loved one, including ways to support rituals and traditions.

Course Overview

The last days and hours of a person's life are precious - to the person and their family. Providing care at this time requires you to prepare, such that you can provide calm, compassionate care that supports the family. Learn how to prepare yourself, and ways to support the family to prepare themselves for the last days and hours. Understand the physical changes in the last days and hours, and the psychosocial implications of each of the changes for family. Learn ways to support the person's physical comfort and to support the family to understand what the changes mean. Learn how to care for a body after death, and ways to support family to be with their deceased loved one. Learn how rituals can help people in their grief, and ways PSWs can support rituals and traditions.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

- Explain ways that the team can prepare to provide care and support the person and family in last days and hours and following death.
- Explain the importance of advance care planning in identifying rituals, traditions, and practices to follow in the last days and hours, following death, and in caring for the body.
- Describe the central roles of integrating a palliative approach and advance care planning early in the illness trajectory to ensuring appropriate support for a person in their last days and hours.
- Explain the common physical changes that occur in the last days and hours and the psychosocial implications of these changes for the person and the family (including dry sore mouth). Describe ways to support the person and family for each change.
- Describe ways to support and provide care for a person and family at the time of death and following death.
- Explain the PSW's role in caring for the body following death.

Resources

In this course you will need:

1. Access to a printer for course documents
2. A writing journal or notebook for writing reflections and course notes.