Emotional Intelligence in Hospice and Palliative Care

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Disclosures
Beth Freitas has no real or perceived conflicts of interest that relate to this presentation.

Objectives
1. Define what are emotions
2. Describe the components of one Emotional Intelligence (EI) Framework
3. Identify three ways EI is important in hospice and palliative care nursing
4. Identify three methods to assist with difficult emotions: personal and systems
What are emotions?

- Source
- Response
- Expression

What is Emotional Intelligence?

- Ability to identify emotions in self
- Ability to identify emotions in others
- Ability to manage emotions effectively
Why is this important to me as a hospice or palliative care nurse?

- Natural body tendency is fight or flight
- Impact on personal health
- Impact on care for patient and/or family

What are common emotional pairs?

- Joy vs. Sadness
- Trust vs. Disgust
- Fear vs. Anger
- Surprise vs. Anticipation
What emotions in hospice and palliative care?

- Patients and families
  - Denial
  - Anger
  - Bargaining
  - Sadness
  - Depression
  - Frustration
  - Guilt
  - Acceptance

Emotional Intelligence Rounds

- What is going on emotionally with your patients?
- What is going on emotionally with you?
- What is the most difficult emotion for you to deal with? What do you do to deal with it?
Most difficult emotion?

- Anger
- Sadness

Case Study
Mrs. M is a 78 year old woman with end stage breast cancer. She is pleasantly confused. She thinks the staff are her sons and daughters. Her oldest biological son is very upset with the care she is receiving. He feels it takes too long for people to answer his phone calls/mother’s call light. He speaks disrespectfully to the female staff. He frequently asks the nurses’ aides questions that are more appropriate for the physicians.

What is anger?

- Usually comes form a primary emotion....
  - Afraid
  - Attacked
  - Offended
  - Disrespected
  - Forced
  - Trapped
  - Pressured
What to do with “others’ anger”? 

• Safety first
• Ask opened ended questions
• Try to determine the primary emotion...that’s where the work can begin

Ways to avoid feeling emotions

• Excessive behaviors: eating, drinking, exercise
• Ignoring
• Always staying busy....

Steps for anger management

• Acknowledge emotion: “Yes, I’m angry.”
• Take responsibility
• Figure out why
• Release the emotion constructively
Case Study

Mr. K is 32 years old. He and his girlfriend have lived together for the past 8 years. They have two young girls: 3 and 7 years old. Mr. K has metastatic colon cancer. He sought treatment at a major cancer center and has been away from his family for the past 8 months. He is actively dying but he does not want to give up hope for a cure. His girlfriend is unable to come visit him at the hospital.

Sadness: patients and families

- Confirm emotion
- Listen
- Can action be taken? Who needs to act?
- Avoid “fix it” statements

Positive management: personal

- Acknowledge
- Mediation
- Guided imagery
- Journal
- Exercise
- Sing
- Play in garden
- Prayer
Positive management: systems

• Professional resources: therapist and peer group
• Environment

Culture and emotions

• Male/female
• Caucasian/Asian
• Extravert/introvert
• Manager/employee

Summary

• Emotional Intelligence: what’s going on with you, your patients, and how are you managing?
• How do you manage anger
• How do you manage sadness
• What are your emotional biases?
Thank you!

References


