

Teaming Up to Bring Palliative and End of Life Care Education to Rural Interprofessionals

Challenge

Results from a 2012 statewide assessment indicated a significant need for palliative and end of life training for healthcare professionals. The growing need for quality palliative and end of life care is crucial for South Dakota rural residents who prefer to be in the familiarity of their communities during this transitional time of life. Specialized education is currently available to a select group of students and professionals via the Interdisciplinary Palliative Care (IPC) Seminar through Sanford School of Medicine in Sioux Falls, Huron, and Rapid City. The primary challenge is to transport and tailor this education to rural locations. LifeCircle SD, a statewide collaboration of institutions, organizations and people committed to improving end-of-life care, achieved this outcome with support of a workgroup implementation grant from the Comprehensive Cancer Control Program. LifeCircle's interprofessional team, consisting of an MD, MSW, APRN, PharmD and DMin, collaborated during a nine month period to plan, develop and implement a day-long workshop in Winner, SD on September 21, 2014.

Solution

This interdisciplinary team adapted an already established curriculum developed by LifeCircle South Dakota for the *Interdisciplinary Palliative Care (IPA) Seminar*. The curriculum was tailored to fit within the context of a one-day workshop and to meet the rural and frontier practice setting of the interdisciplinary health care team. Winner Regional Hospital graciously furnished use of their meeting space, including refreshment and lunch breaks. With the support of grant funding and the hospital, the team was able to innovatively offer the free workshop within close distance for rural attendees.

Summary

The established IPC Seminar curriculum was tailored for this workshop to meet the unique aspects of the rural practice settings of the interdisciplinary health care team. Almost 70% of participants indicated that their attitudes about interprofessional practice had either completely or partially changed after participating in the workshop. Additionally, significant gains in confidence of skills in working with patients and families at end of life as well as working with interprofessional teams to deliver palliative and end-of-life care services were found after participants completed the workshop. The workshop was both practical and feasible; the team found it energizing to be in the rural practice setting of the participants, have dialogue regarding their practice concerns and learn about the positive practices already in place. Other healthcare entities have also expressed continued interest in replicating this innovative workshop in other rural areas.



Results

Thirty-six interprofessionals attended the workshop and presented multiple disciplines, including nursing, social work, administration, chaplaincy and medicine. Each participant completed a pre/post survey and was sent a follow up survey in December 2014. Participants provided positive verbal and written feedback; an overwhelming majority responded with 'strongly agree' or 'agree' on all 10 evaluation criteria. Significant gains in confidence of skills in working with patients and families at end of life, as well as working with interprofessional teams to deliver palliative and end-of-life care services were found after participants completed the one day workshop. Gains in palliative and end of life care skills were mostly retained at the three month follow-up time point.



“This was by far the best palliative care workshop I have been to.”

“I would be interested in future workshops involving palliative and hospice care.”

“The interprofessional approach was the most useful element of the workshop for me.”

- workshop attendees

Successes

Peer-reviewed publications and the IPC curriculum were combined to develop the workshop content around the areas of living the reality of dying, sharing bad news, early and middle stage pain and non-pain symptom management, legal and ethical issues at end of life, and managing expectations at end of life. Of the three month survey respondents, 44 percent said that since participating in the workshop, they have been able to begin implementing palliative and end-of-life care services in their own facilities.

Resources

www.usd.edu/lifecirclesd
www.cancersd.com
www.goodandhealthysd.org

Local Contacts

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