

Palliative Care Education for Undergraduate Nurses in Practice

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Background

Education of all healthcare staff is key to improving palliative and end of life care⁽¹⁾. Qualified nurses have a duty to facilitate students to develop their competencies⁽²⁾. Student nurses often relish the opportunity to learn from practitioners, whilst sharing clinical expertise through teaching continues to be rewarding for specialist nurses^(2, 3). Edinburgh Napier University link lecturer suggested a collaborative approach to promote palliative care education within the clinical setting of a specialist palliative day centre.

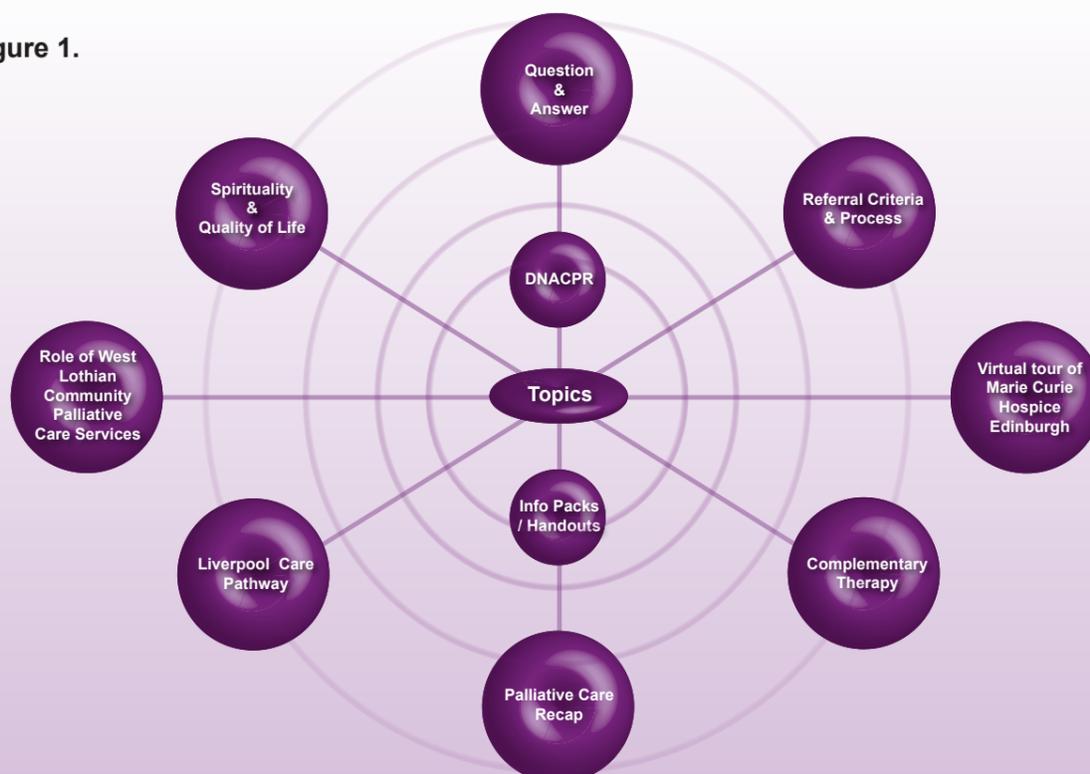
Aim

Many students and healthcare professionals request visits to the Macmillan Centre (St John's Hospital). Offering a half day study session was considered a way of achieving this whilst providing more structure and direction to visits.

Process

- Nurse led sessions developed to complement existing syllabus
- Systematic method used to design, implement and assess sessions
- Key evidence-based issues in palliative care covered
- Attendees informed of the Specialist Palliative Care Service in West Lothian and linked services
- Intention of developing a rolling programme with guest speakers
- 4 topics covered from a selection outlined in figure 1

Figure 1.



Engagement

Students were emailed by the link lecturer and the staff nurse at the Macmillan Centre advised all mentors about the study session.

Evaluation

- Student and facilitator evaluation is built-in to enlighten future sessions
- The incorporation of discussion and debate during the sessions ensures sufficient feedback from students to help speakers evaluate what is being learned
- Students are also asked for anonymous written feedback (metaplan evaluation) at the end of each session
- Informal feedback from lecturers and mentors

Students comment on the relaxed environment within the Macmillan Centre and are able to explain the role of the local specialist service to other professionals and their patients. Sessions have given students the opportunity to engage with clinical experts and have helped address any misconceptions about palliative care. Peer interaction is encouraged and students are able to share and reflect upon placement experiences as they are happening.

Conclusion

The response from university students has been positive with most agreeing that the sessions have proved meaningful to them whilst they are out in practice. The collaboration between Edinburgh Napier University and the multiprofessionals involved has established a cohesive learning environment, supporting partnership working. This model could be utilised to facilitate other disciplines with an interest in palliative care.

References

1. Scottish Government. 2008. *Living and dying well: a national plan for palliative and end of life care in Scotland*. Scottish Government. Edinburgh.
2. National Midwifery Council. 2008. *Standard to support learning and assessment in practice*. National Midwifery Council. London.
3. Price, B. 2010. Disseminating best practice through teaching. *Nursing Standard*, 24 (27), pp.35-41.

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