



Hospice and Palliative Care 101

An Introduction to Compassionate Careers

This handout, created by the Next Generation Leadership Council, offers an overview of the goals of hospice and palliative care as well as a preview of the career opportunities available in the field. As the US population continues to age, home-based care for those living with serious illnesses will only continue to increase in demand and importance, making it a growth-oriented and mission-driven field for young professionals.

Hospice Care

Purpose: A type of health care that focuses on the relief of a terminally-ill patient's distress and symptoms, and attending to their emotional and spiritual needs during the final stages of life.

Goal: Hospice care prioritizes comfort and quality of life by reducing pain and suffering.

Services: Hospice care is provided by a team that works together focusing on the patient's needs. The team usually consists of:

- Clergy or other counselors
- Home health aides
- Hospice physician (or medical director)
- Nurses
- Social workers
- Trained volunteers
- Speech, physical, and occupational therapists, if needed
- The patient's personal physician may be included

Palliative Care

Purpose: Helps people at any stage of serious illness stay at home rather than having to go to the emergency room or the hospital for treatment. It is specialized medical care that reduces physical discomfort, improves quality of life, and makes living with a serious illness easier.

Goal: Enhances the quality of life by managing symptoms and supporting patients and their families.

Services: Palliative care supports both the person with the illness as well as anyone who helps care for them, and offers the following benefits and services:

- An extra layer of support, allowing patients to have a good quality of life and spend more time at home while still receiving the best medical care.
- Helps patients' doctors talk to each other.
- Offers a team for all of a patient's concerns.

Careers in Hospice & Palliative Care

Key Attributes

- Empathetic
- Compassionate
- Detail-oriented
- Self-sufficient
- Critical thinker
- Observant
- Ethical
- Emotionally intelligent

Clinical Careers

- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Licensed Vocational/Practical Nurse (LVN/LPN)
- Certified Nursing Assistant/Aide (CNA)
- Social Worker
- Spiritual Care Counselor/Chaplain
- Bereavement Counselor
- Physician/Advanced Practice Provider

Non-Clinical Careers

- Marketing
- Sales
- Administration
- Operations
- Finance

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