

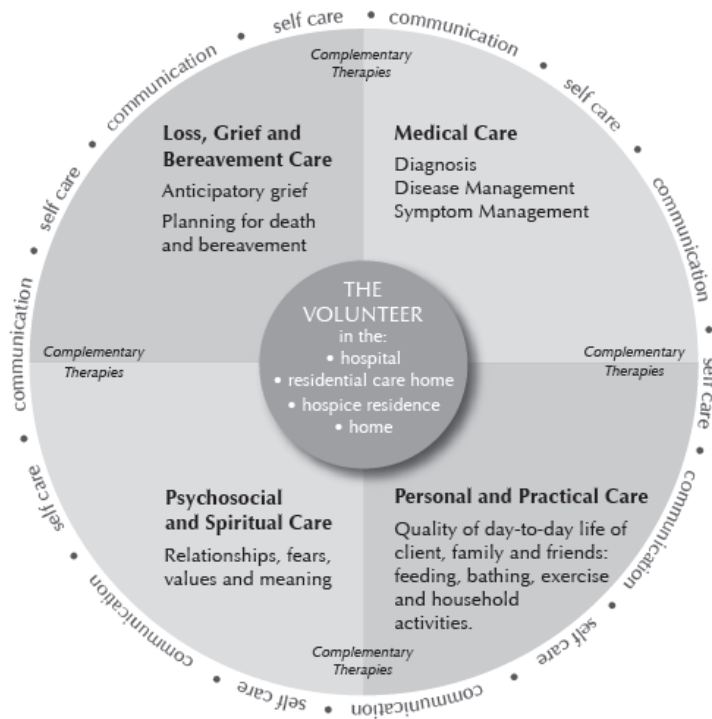


Module 7

SELF CARE

*You mustn't be frightened
if a sadness
rises in front of you,
larger than any you have ever seen;
if an anxiety,
like light and cloud-shadows,
moves over your hands and over
everything you do.
You must realize that something is
happening to you,
that life has not forgotten you,
that it holds you in its hand
and will not let you fall.*

Rainer Maria Rilke



Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the Self-Care Module, volunteers will:

1. Recognize the importance of self-awareness and a support network to keep their life in balance.
2. Understand the need for personal boundaries – both theirs and their client's/family's and will be able to effectively create and respect those boundaries.
3. Recognize and respect their own limitations and needs around self-care when working with a client and family.
4. Understand and respect the need to give themselves some time to process the loss of a client before beginning with another client.
5. Know what self-care options are available to them and which ones best suit their needs and preferences.
6. Be comfortable asking questions of and requesting support from hospice staff and volunteers and from other members of the hospice palliative care team.
7. Be comfortable and effective in supporting fellow volunteers and be able to express if they are not comfortable.
8. When appropriate, be comfortable and effective in sharing self-care options with clients and family members.



What is Self-Care?

Self-care includes the measures taken by hospice volunteers to ensure that they are able to remain present, appropriate and effective in supporting their clients and families. Self-care can help volunteers avoid burn out and compassion fatigue.

All hospice volunteers need to give themselves time to step back, to rest, to reflect, to seek support and/or to acquire new skills. This may be challenging, particularly for new volunteers who have little experience with self-care.

NOTE: As with the Communication module, you may choose to incorporate Self-Care into other modules or present it on its own, early in your training cycle.

Training

Orientation and Basic Training

1. Describe self-care, the importance of self-care and provide examples.
2. Provide opportunities for volunteers to learn experientially:
 - How to deal with loss, grief and bereavement in their own lives.
 - How to recognize and anticipate that they need self-care.
 - provide examples specific to the hospice volunteer experience.
 - How to recognize and respect their own limitations as hospice volunteers.
 - About boundaries
 - what they are
 - how to respect their own boundaries
 - recognize, acknowledge and respect the client's and family's boundaries
 - How to transition from their personal life to beginning a shift as a hospice volunteer and back to their personal life.

Ongoing Training

1. Continue to build self-care into any upgrading or advanced training.
2. Encourage those volunteers who are interested to take training/workshops in self-care and support them in sharing their experience/skills with other volunteers.



Training Methods

Provide opportunities for volunteers to share and experience different forms of self-care:

1. Individually

- You may wish to invite practitioners and experts in the field to offer sessions or workshops.
- Volunteers may also share their own skills and experiences.

2. With others

Build in ongoing opportunities for and encourage participation in:

- formal and informal debriefing sessions
- networking, within and beyond your volunteer group
- mentoring
- counselling
- sharing experiences of self-care with each other

3. As a hospice organization

Ensure the following are supported:

- evaluation (including self-evaluation)
- volunteer recognition
- celebrations
- creating a supportive environment of dialogue, questioning and constructive feedback.
- providing resources in your library and/or a list of resources volunteers may request from the public library, obtain on line or purchase.



A Thank You to Volunteers

Volunteers offer wonderful gifts to British Columbians requiring end-of-life care and support. In addition, the volunteers discover opportunities for self-growth and education through their generous giving to others.

The opportunity to make a difference for humanity by offering caring support is a rich and rewarding endeavor.

We trust that this “Guide To Hospice Volunteer Training in British Columbia” will assist you in your preparation as a hospice palliative volunteer. Thank you for your generosity and caring.



RESOURCES

Module 7

SELF-CARE

RESOURCES

- ❖ **Health and Safety Tips**
- ❖ **My Feelings List**
- ❖ **Keeping a Grief Journal**
- ❖ **A Significant Loss in My Life Exercise**
- ❖ **Self-Care Manifesto**

Stay Healthy and Use Antibiotics Wisely

The Vancouver Island Health Authority offers tips to stay healthy through cold and flu season – and cautions residents to use antibiotics wisely to prevent bacteria from becoming resistant to antibiotics.



Stay Healthy

Did you know that 80% of common infections are spread by hands?

Handwashing is the best way to stop the spread of infections.

Proper hand washing technique includes:

1. Fifteen seconds of vigorous rubbing of hands together until soapy lather appears.
2. Scrub between the fingers, under the fingernails, around the tops and palms of the hands.
3. Rinse under warm running water.
4. Dry the hands with a clean, disposable towel, and turn off the faucet using a towel as a barrier.

Always wash your hands:

- Before meals
- After blowing your nose or wiping your child's nose
- Before breastfeeding
- After changing diapers
- After using the toilet or helping your child use the toilet
- After playing with toys shared with other children

Use Antibiotics Wisely

Using antibiotics when they are not needed can lead to antibiotic resistance. Although both bacteria and viruses cause respiratory tract infections, antibiotics only work against bacteria.

Viral:

- Infections include: colds, flu, croup, laryngitis, chest colds (bronchitis) and most sore throats.
- Viral infections are more contagious (if more than one family member has the same illness, odds are it is a viral infection).
- Be patient if you have cold symptoms, cough or a sore throat. Most viral illnesses take 4-5 days before getting better and up to 3-weeks for full recovery.

Bacterial:

- Cause infections such as pneumonia and strep throat.
- Are less common and do not spread from one person to another as readily.
- Use regular soap. Antibacterial soap is not recommended because it promotes bacterial resistance.

Glad	Sad	Mad	Scared
Calm	Ashamed	Aggravated	Afraid
Caring	Blue	Angry	Anxious
Cheerful	Bored	Annoyed	Apprehensive
Comfortable	Depressed	Bitchy	Cautious
Confident	Devastated	Bitter	Concerned
Ecstatic	Disappointed	Disapproving	Confused
Encouraged	Discouraged	Disgusted	Distrustful
Excited	Down (in the dumps)	Enraged	Fearful
Fortunate	Embarrassed	Exasperated	Freaked out
Fulfilled	Exhausted	Frustrated	Frightened
Glad	Gloomy	Furious	Haunted
Happy	Guilty	Growly	Horrified
Joyful	Helpless	Grumpy	Insecure
Loving	Hopeless	Hateful	Nervous
Mischievous	Hurt	Irritated	Panicky
Passionate	Lonely	Mad	Restless
Pleased	Regretful	Offended	Scared
Overjoyed	Rueful	Pissed off	Shocked
Relieved	Sad	Resentful	Shy
Satisfied	Tired	Snarly	Terrified
Thrilled	Unhappy	Ticked off	Uncertain
Vibrant			
Vivacious			

Miscellaneous: Jealous, Tense, Bewildered, Surprised, Weird, Disconnected, Envious

Please add any others you can think of.

KEEPING A GRIEF JOURNAL

Get yourself a stenographer's notebook, a diary, a lined journal, or some other notebook. Nothing else goes in this book ... it is a record of your journey through grief. Keeping a journal such as this, allows you to look back and see the change and progress you have made, when weeks and months down the road you get hit with the thought that nothing is getting better and that this pain will never end.

It is a tool to remind you what has been helpful to you already, when you get a day where you can't think of what to do next. In the beginning, this journal may seem like it is just highlighting your pain and does not bring much comfort. The comfort and importance you find in the journal will become evident with time. The journal will help you stay in charge of your grief rather than your grief taking control of you.

Leave a line or two between entries and be sure to record the time and date of each entry. The following are some suggested things to include in your journal:

- A significant event that happened today
- The person who was most important to me today
- Something I found helpful today
- Changes I observe happening to me
- My plans for tomorrow
- Notes to myself

The best time to write in this journal is in the evening at least an hour or so before bedtime. Often evenings are the hardest time. This is the time that loneliness and despair can sink in. By writing and focusing on the changes and the things that have been helpful, you can actually take charge of your grief.

Some people find that writing about their pain, their confusion, fears and frustration helps ease the intensity. If you want to include this type of writing divide your daily entry into two sections. The first section is where you write your feelings, thoughts and fears.

Do not worry about punctuation, spelling or grammar, just write. Get out all that you can; when you find yourself running out of things to write, stop.

The second section is more structured and includes the things suggested above. It focuses on events, people, progress and change, things that are helpful and what you are going to do next. It is important to follow this order. By doing the 'feeling' writing first and the 'thinking' writing second you will gain a better sense of control over your grief and be more grounded and in a better frame of mind for going to sleep.

A SIGNIFICANT LOSS IN MY LIFE EXERCISE

The “Talker”:

Sit quietly and think of a significant loss in your life. It need not be the most traumatic one – it needs to be one you are comfortable talking about. If you have not experienced a death in your life, then think of another loss. **You are not to say anything - just get in touch with your feelings.**

The “Listener”:

Maintain some eye contact. **If you must speak, you are allowed to say only, “I’m sorry for your loss.”**

This will be maintained for a minute or two.

When the bells rings:

The “Talker” will talk for 10-15 minutes about this loss.

The “Listener” will practice creative (empathic) listening and open-ended questions (e.g. “tell me more”).

LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND INSTEAD OF LISTENING TO REPLY.

Questions or comments will then automatically come if you need clarification or want to invite the “talker” to share more or want to let the “talker” know you have heard.

When the bells rings again, both of you stand up, take a few deep breaths to let go of the scenario and then switch roles and repeat the exercise. (This will be good practice for when you are with your clients – centering yourself and letting go after being with a client.)

A SELF CARE MANIFESTO

We who care for the bereaved and the dying have a wondrous opportunity to help others embrace and grow through grief and to lead fuller, more deeply-lived lives ourselves. But our work is draining – physically, emotionally and spiritually. We must first care for ourselves if we want to care well for others. This manifesto is intended to help you to practice good self-care.

1. ***I deserve to lead a joyful, whole life.*** No matter how much I love and value my work, my life is multifaceted. My family, my friends, my other interests and my spirituality also deserve my time and attention. I deserve my time and attention.
2. ***My work does not define me.*** I am a unique, worthy person outside my work life. While relationships can help me feel good about myself, they are not what is inside me. Sometimes I need to stop “doing” and instead focus on simply “being”.
3. ***I am not the only one who can help the dying and bereaved.*** When I feel indispensable, I tend to ignore my own needs. There are many talented caregivers in my community who can also help the dying and the bereaved
4. ***I must develop healthy eating, sleeping and exercise patterns.*** I am aware of the importance of these things for those I help, but I may neglect them myself. A well-balanced diet, adequate sleep and regular exercise allow me be the best I can be.
5. ***I must maintain boundaries in my helping relationships.*** As a death caregiver I cannot avoid getting emotionally involved with dying and bereaved people. Nor would I want to. Active empathy allows me to be a good companion to them. However, I must remember I am responsible *to* others, not *for* others.
6. ***I am not perfect and I must not expect myself to be.*** I wish my helping efforts were always successful. But even when I offer compassionate, “on-target” help, the recipient isn’t always prepared to use it. When I do make mistakes, I should see them as an integral part of learning and growth, not as measurements of my self-worth.
7. ***I must practice effective time-management skills.*** I must set practical goals for how I spend my time. I must also remember Pareto’s principle: twenty percent of what I do nets eighty percent of my results.
8. ***I must set limits and alleviate stresses I can do something about.*** I must work to achieve a clear sense of expectations and set realistic deadlines. I should enjoy what I do accomplish in helping others but shouldn’t berate myself for what is beyond me.
9. ***I must listen to my inner voice.*** As a caregiver to the dying and the bereaved, I will at times become grief overloaded. When my inner voice begins to whisper its fatigue, I must listen carefully and allow myself some grief downtime.
10. ***I should express the personal me in both my work and play.*** I shouldn’t be afraid to demonstrate my unique talents and abilities. I must also make time each day to remind myself of what is important to me. If I only had three months to live, what would I do?
11. ***I am a spiritual being.*** I must spend alone time focusing on self-understanding and self-love. To be present to those I work with and to learn from those I companion, I must appreciate the beauty of life and living. I must renew my spirit