

Eastern Palliative Care

Model of care



2009

Model of Care

At EPC we actively engage with people and their families to develop a therapeutic relationship. We journey with them, recognising the essence of the individual as they approach death and transform or aspire to a sense of acceptance, contentedness or sacredness.

We provide a unified approach using the specialist skills and expertise of Nurses, Psychologists, Art Therapists, Social Workers, Massage Therapists, Pastoral Care Workers, Music Therapists, Physicians, Volunteers, to enhance and support the quality of life and improving the sense of well being for people with specialist palliative needs.

Where we work:

EPC considers home to be a person's own home, a family members home, nursing home, hostel, supported home, caravan park, mobile home or boarding house.

Specialist palliative needs

We work with people who have been diagnosed with a terminal condition, with little or no prospect of cure, and for whom the primary treatment goal is quality of life. We also work with their carers who may be a family member, friend, neighbor or significant support person.

- The people we work with may benefit from specialist, home based palliative care in one or more of the following ways:
- Assessment and treatment of symptoms such as pain, anxiety, nausea or depression
- Spiritual, social or psychological support to affirm life and regard dying as a normal process
- An interdisciplinary approach to assist the client and caregivers to cope during the stress of a life limiting illness, to live as actively as possible until death and in bereavement.
- Advice to staff who are caring, so that a palliative approach is achieved through support and education.

Volunteers

EPC is fortunate to receive the services of a large number of volunteers who provide support to clients and their carers and families during a difficult period in their lives. Our volunteers compliment the role of staff by providing a community perspective which enhances and expands the services and activities of the organisation.

Volunteer involvement covers a range of activities, including:

- Client, carer and family support such as providing respite care for the family, practical tasks or simply being there
- Administrative support such as assistance with the day-to-day running of the corporate and care team offices, fundraising, public relations and membership of Community Support groups
- Biography service, allowing our clients to record their reflections on life's journey

- Bereavement follow up such as participating in the Walking Through Grief and Talking Through Grief programs and Ceremonies of Remembrance
- Membership of EPC's Committee of Management and its sub-committees

Nursing

The Nurses of Eastern Palliative Care recognize and affirm the individuality and uniqueness of our clients and families/carers by providing specialist nursing care and symptom management as well as practical hands on care 24 hours a day 7 days per week.

Our role is constantly evolving and is a complex and extensive one which provides specialist knowledge to a wide range of both health professionals and people in the community.

Our nurses understand that at the very heart of nursing is the quality of the interaction between the nurse, the client and the carer recognizing that palliative care nursing involves a particular attitude of mind. This approach incorporates excellent communication skills, consistency, consideration and confidence in our autonomous role. The holistic interdisciplinary care provided by our nurses embodies compassion, empathy and dignity and encompasses psychological, spiritual and emotional support. Our nurses are in the privileged position of caring for clients in the comfort and familiar surroundings of their home.

Family Support Workers

Our Family Support Workers (FSW) work as part of the interdisciplinary team. Their primary aim is to establish a therapeutic relationship with clients and their carers. They are either qualified social workers, pastoral carers or psychologists. Our Family Support Workers journey with the client and their family and provide social and emotional support, counselling, spiritual care, information and practical assistance. They remain available to bereaved family members.

Our Family Support Workers also assist with:

- Accessing home based community services and care equipment
- Assisting with Centrelink documentation, carer entitlements and other documentation
- Providing information regarding Enduring Power of Attorney and other end of life decision making including Wills and funerals
- Providing advocacy and resource information

The Family Support Workers are trained to provide bereavement counselling and also run a number of bereavement groups. Our groups aim to assist people in understanding their grief and supporting them while they adjust to their loss, as well as provide meaningful connections with others who have had a similar experience.

Art Therapy = ART + THERAPY

Our Art Therapist's work as part of the interdisciplinary team and are specifically trained to support individuals and their families with their palliative needs at home, a service which extends into bereavement care. We provide opportunities for people to engage in therapy that combines art processes with a range of visual media. The non-verbal quality of Art Therapy provides people with an alternate way of communicating. For this reason Art Therapy may benefit relationships including supporting children as they come to terms with what is going on. Because Art Therapy is not about being 'artistic' it is very beneficial for people of all ages and from all walks of life. It assists those who may be seeking to make sense of their life's events, find expression or leave a legacy behind.

Art therapy may include:

- Drawing
- Printmaking
- Painting
- Collage
- Sculpture
- Working with fabric, wood, stone, photography or other media.

Massage Therapy

Our Massage Therapists works as part of the interdisciplinary team to support the client and carer and are specifically trained to work with people in their homes. The massage sessions are tailored according to the clients needs, to promote relaxation of mind and body, thus reducing stress and anxiety. Massage also assists with relieving of oedema, digestive and respiratory symptoms. In particular it is known to relieve pain and ease soft tissue discomfort associated with inactivity and weakness.

The benefits of massage are numerous and include:

- promoting a range of physiological and psychological changes
- gentle positive touch encourages communication and emotional expression,
- provides nurturing care.
- general comfort and wellbeing.

Massage is also offered for the support of carers and the bereaved.

Music Therapy

Music therapists engage with clients in listening to or making music to enhance, maintain and support their quality of life and sense of wellbeing. As part of the interdisciplinary team we use music with people who have specialist palliative needs to help people connect with themselves and their families as they approach death. We are specifically trained to use music according to a person's interests and wishes, whilst assisting with their physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs. We also offer music therapy in bereavement.

Music Therapy may support clients and their families by:

- Facilitating life review and reflection through live and recorded music
- Assisting with expression of loss and grief issues

- Providing an alternative way of communicating by writing songs and active music making
- Creating a legacy for family and friends
- Reducing feelings of loneliness
- Facilitating relaxation and enjoyment through listening to music

Medical Care

The Palliative Medicine Clinicians at EPC are valued members of the interdisciplinary team. Our Palliative Medicine Clinicians play an integral role in our management of patients with progressive, active and advanced diseases with the aim of optimal quality of life. Consistent with our model of care there is a focus on the amelioration and management of symptoms with a holistic approach.

The Palliative Medicine Clinicians role includes participation in weekly patient review and care planning meetings to contribute medically to patient care plans. Review of patient problematic issues, provision of an on-call service 24 hours a day to the EPC team and General Practitioners for the care of EPC patients and ongoing support, education and reassurance to General Practitioners and EPC staff to optimize care. They also liaise with key medical care providers, participate in regional general practice and various state palliative medicine committees to ensure good communication and sharing of knowledge with providers of palliative medicine

Finally

Together we engage as a Team. We acknowledge that working with people who are dying touches us. To enable us to do what we do we reflect, we grieve, we listen, we laugh, we cry and we care for each other. We recognising that self care is critical in palliative care. We grow.

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