Fundamentals of HPC - Core

Course Content, Objectives & Expectations

Revised June 30, 2026

The Fundamentals of HPC Core program includes up-to-date, best practice and evidence-informed palliative care knowledge, utilizing the innovative Partnering for Palliative Education learning environment, powered by D2L Brightspace. The course content is peer-reviewed, evidence-informed and up to date; facilitation and mentorship is provided by experienced local palliative care nurse consultants.

Due to continuous changes in hospice and palliative care, we recommend re-taking Fundamentals every five years.

Intended Audience: all Health Care Providers and Hospice Volunteers:

Case Coordinators
Developmental Service Managers
Dietitians
Emergency Medical Services
Family Health Team Staff
Health Administration
Housekeeping Staff
Mental Health Case Managers
Nurses (All Classes)
Occupational Therapists
Organization Leadership
Personal Support Workers/ Health Care Aides
Pharmacists
Physical Therapists
Physicians & Physician Assistants
Recreational Therapists
Social Workers
Specialty Care Services Staff (Renal, Obstetrics, ICU, Acute Care)
Speech Language Professionals
Spiritual Care Providers
Students (Health Care, Helping Professions, etc.)
Volunteers

Why Fundamentals?

The Fundamentals of Hospice Palliative Care is a practical, interactive, case-based learning experience. The course is rooted in the philosophy of the early-integrated palliative approach to care. It is designed to help health and social care providers build confidence and skill in caring for people living with a serious illness.

What you will Learn

Participants will build their skills and confidence to:

- introduce the palliative approach to care early in the illness trajectory, ideally from the time of diagnosis through to the bereavement period.
- practice how to communicate effectively with patients and families facing serious illness including taking a trauma informed approach to care
- understand and contribute to the interprofessional team
- reflect on the loss and grief experienced by patients, caregivers and health/social care providers throughout the illness trajectory
- become familiar with common palliative care tools i.e.,
    - Palliative Performance Scale (PPS)
    - Edmonton Symptom Assessment System (ESAS)

How you will Learn

We believe palliative care is best learned through collaboration, reflection, and practice.

- Facilitated by experienced palliative care nurse mentors
- Interactive, discussion-based sessions, not just passive online modules
- Case-based learning to apply concepts to real clinical situations
- Delivered over 6 weeks, allowing time to integrate learning into practice

Participants consistently highlight the value of learning from colleagues in different roles and care environments, including primary care, long-term care, community care, and acute care.

Why it Matters

When providers feel confident and supported, everyone has better outcomes. This course equips you with the skills to provide a compassionate, coordinated, and high-quality palliative approach to care no matter your role or setting.

Course Content

Over 7 weeks, local palliative care nurse consultant coaches work with health care providers and volunteers to develop comfort in discussing all aspects of dying and death and by becoming aware of the issues in each of the domains (disease management, physical, psychological, social, spiritual, Practical, end-of-life care / death management and loss and grief) that may impact persons/families living with life-limiting illnesses. Learners also gain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of various team members and insight into the importance of effective communication and team function in supporting persons/families as they journey with progressive illness.

Learners will participate as follows:

- **Self-Directed Learning Activities** All course work / materials are provided using the Brightspace Learning environment, thus learners are required to use a computer, tablet or smart phone to participate. Learners are expected to complete the course work by reading and interacting with the course modules online. The course Synopsis will help learners to stay on track: See Fundamentals Course Synopsis

  The Fundamentals curriculum includes:

  - *Introduction to Dying and Death*
  - *Introduction to Hospice Palliative Care*
  - *Disease Management Domain*
  - *Physical Domain*
  - *Psychological Domain*
  - *Spiritual Domain*
  - *Social Domain*
  - *Practical Domain*
  - *End-of-Life Care and Death Management Domain*

- **Case-Based Learning (CBL) Classroom Sessions** Three classroom sessions are scheduled three weeks apart to allow time for online, self-directed readings/ activities and applying learning to daily practice. Learners connect via Zoom for the three virtual classroom sessions.

Notes:

- *This course requires learners to interact with their peers and facilitators during these virtual classroom sessions.*
- *Brightspace tracks learner progress so that facilitators can assist learners to stay on track*
- *Upon successful completion of all Fundamentals course components, learners will receive a Fundamentals of HPC Certificate of Completion. Incomplete attendance or non-participation (e.g., camera off, multitasking) may affect the issuing of certificates)*

Course Objectives

Participation will assist learners to:

- demonstrate sensitivity, understanding and respect for the individuality of the person, family and team/caregivers
- identify and understand issues associated with illness and bereavement (Domains of Issues)
- effectively communicate with the person, family and team
- recognize and report changes in any of the Domains of Issues Associated with Illness and Bereavement
- provide hospice palliative supportive care strategies
- actively learn and develop personally, and contribute as part of a team and organization
- demonstrate sensitivity to the impact of personal attitudes, behaviours and values on the illness experience of the person, family and team/caregivers

Course Expectations

Participation in all aspects of the program is mandatory to receive a certificate. During the Fundamentals course, learners must:

- **Attend all 3 Case-Based Classroom Sessions:** Learners are present for each session and actively participate in activities and discussions
- **Complete Self-Directed Reading**
  - Fundamentals Program Guide (Chapters 1-11)
  - Complete Fundamentals e-Learning Modules (A-L)
- **Participate in two Peer-to-Peer Exchanges:** Learners connect with a peer to enable collaborative learning and shared solution finding
- **Complete one Reflective Activity:** This is an opportunity for learners to individually reflect on meaning making in
  one's life