

# Fact Sheet 3 AUTHENTIC DIVERSITY



## KEY MESSAGES

- Death and dying are among the most significant and sacred events in all societies.
- Supporting the client's and their loved ones cultural, linguistic and spiritual needs and preferences; accepting they may be different to yours.
- Ensure all palliative care services identify and support the cultural, linguistic and spiritual needs of care clients and their families, including rituals and practice around death and dying.
- Respect and value the uniqueness of each person.
- Upholding privacy, confidentiality and disclosure of information as per scope of practice of the care provider.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- We can't know all cultural beliefs and practices in relation to palliative care, death and dying. We should ask the client and their family what is important to them.
- Communicate with the client and their loved one about their quality of life choices; ensuring appropriate referrals are addressed by the whole care team.
- Build levels of trust, showing empathy and supporting endeavours to empower the client and their loved ones to make informed choices about the care to be provided.
- Understand that people will have different interpretations of the concept of quality of life, and that these may be culturally determined.

- Consider the use of interpreter services when care plans are developed and reviewed with the client and their loved ones.
- Highlight culturally appropriate strategies that are acceptable to all involved.
- Where possible provide information and support services in the preferred language.
- Consultation with the client and their loved ones is very important. Religious, ethical and cultural sensitivity must be taken into account when discussing things such as:
  - Importance of the family – more than the traditional sense of family (e.g. Kinship for those who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; family of choice for those who identify as LGBTI)
  - Discussing private issues with health professionals or non-family members (who the client and family wish to speak to for advice)
  - The amount of information they want to receive concerning diagnosis and prognosis.
  - Whether it is appropriate to communicate with the family about diagnosis and prognosis (who is told and who is not)
  - Importance of food or refreshments (offence may be taken by the family if refusal is given)
  - Feelings about hospitals (taboo subjects and choices)
  - Attitudes to pain management (religious and spiritual choices)
  - Certain medical practices that they want withheld (what is in the Advanced Care Directive?).
  - End-of-life rituals. For example, last rites, visits from friends and family, patient giving away belongings (involvement of other services)
  - Post-death rituals. For example, what needs to happen to the body in preparation for burial (involvement of other services)
  - Post-death procedures. For example, autopsy or organ donation (cultural sensitivity, funeral directors' choices).

## WHY IT WORKS

- Identifying and reflecting on your own emotional responses to death and dying and raising issues and reactions to your coordinator enables you to recognise diversity.
- Using a non-judgmental approach encourages the maintenance of the client's needs and preferences.
- Creating a supportive environment ensures the client's and their loved one's lifestyle, social, spiritual and cultural choices are acknowledged.
- Recognising the client's holistic needs supports diversity.
- Monitoring the impact of the client's needs and referring to appropriate members of the care team in line with organisational protocol to ensure the client is supported.

## REFERENCES

[http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/RP9697/97rp4\\_Residential\\_Aged\\_Care](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/RP9697/97rp4_Residential_Aged_Care)

Palliative Approach Toolkit – [www.caresearch.com.au/PAToolkit](http://www.caresearch.com.au/PAToolkit)

[http://www.aacqa.gov.au/providers/home-care/processes-and-resources/resources-specifically-for-home-care/fact-sheets/homecarecommonstandardsv14\\_0.pdf](http://www.aacqa.gov.au/providers/home-care/processes-and-resources/resources-specifically-for-home-care/fact-sheets/homecarecommonstandardsv14_0.pdf)

Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing – [www.culturaldiversity.com.au/resources/practice-guides/palliative-care](http://www.culturaldiversity.com.au/resources/practice-guides/palliative-care)

