

Developing a Consensus-Based Palliative Care Workforce Capabilities Framework

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Introduction

The demand for high-quality palliative care continues to grow, highlighting the need for a well-trained workforce across all sectors - equipped with essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Aim

To develop an updated version of the palliative care workforce capabilities framework to define the core knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to provide palliative care in contemporary health and aged care settings.

Methods and Results

Phase 1: Literature review

Fourteen frameworks from six countries were reviewed. Six internal PCC4U and PEPA documents were also reviewed.

Phase 2: Initial capabilities

The research team reviewed existing frameworks and proposed a revised palliative care capability framework reflecting contemporary practice.

Phase 3: Consultations

Consumers: Ten consumers were interviewed to understand their expectations of healthcare professionals and seek feedback on draft capabilities.
Partners: At the partners' symposium, 80 attendees refined the proposed framework capabilities and indicators.

Phase 4: Experts Consensus

A modified Delphi with experts from health, aged care, and community sectors achieved high agreement ($\geq 80\%$) across two rounds, with response rates of 64.1% and 77.5%.

Conclusion

The framework provides a robust, evidence-based guide for palliative care education and offers a structured approach to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of palliative care educational programs and resources to ensure healthcare providers are prepared to provide quality palliative care to all.

PALLIATIVE CARE WORKFORCE CAPABILITIES FRAMEWORK

The Palliative Care Workforce Capabilities Framework presents seven interconnected capabilities within a “knowing, being, doing” model. **Knowing** covers the diverse knowledge needed for palliative care; **Being** reflects the values and professional qualities essential to care provision; and **Doing** refers to the practical skills for meeting the needs of people with life-limiting conditions, with an emphasis on relationship-building. The framework applies to all workforce groups and is intended to guide graduate-level education. It emphasises inclusive, culturally safe care—particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples—while aligning with national standards to ensure safe and high-quality care.

KNOWING



Understand the principles and values of palliative care

- Identify underlying principles of palliative care, including holistic, person and family-centred care
- Describe the values of palliative care including dignity, empowerment, compassion, equity, respect, advocacy, excellence, accountability
- Describe the role of the interprofessional care team in palliative care
- Identify national standards relevant to provision of safe and quality palliative care.

Understand unique responses of individuals, families and communities to life-limiting conditions, dying and death

- Understand common life-limiting conditions and their trajectories
- Identify care needs, preferences and responses to address a person and their family's needs
- Recognise signs of deterioration, imminent dying and death
- Understand the experiences of loss, grief and bereavement.

DOING

Use person and family-centred communication in the context of palliative care

- Use open, sensitive and culturally safe communication to facilitate person and family-centred decision-making
- Develop care plans that are continuously informed by the person's preferences and choices
- Use consistent communication of treatment and care options, and their likelihood of success, risks, and prognosis.
- Develop therapeutic relationships to facilitate expression of changing goals of care and care needs
- Foster collaborative partnerships with healthcare providers across settings
- Promote the needs and wishes of the person and family within the interprofessional team.

Provide inclusive and culturally safe care for people affected by life-limiting conditions

- Provide palliative care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities that recognises cultural and historical influences on health and perspectives of dying and death
- Provide culturally safe care that demonstrates respect for the diverse social and cultural perspectives on healthcare, life-limiting conditions, dying, death, loss, grief and bereavement
- Provide inclusive information to support decision-making regarding goals of care, advance care planning and end-of-life care choices
- Collaborate with and provide support for families, carers and communities to deliver culturally safe palliative care
- Provide palliative care that recognises the barriers to accessing care and enables an inclusive approach for culturally diverse groups.

Provide collaborative and person-centred care to optimise quality of life for people with life-limiting conditions

- Provide palliative care at the time and in the place that best meets the person's and their family's needs
- Provide palliative care that is proactive and responsive to accommodate changing needs
- Contribute effectively to the interprofessional team approach to the provision of palliative.

BEING

Respect ethical frameworks and legislation that support palliative care practice

- Apply frameworks to manage ethical aspects of palliative care practice
- Adhere to legislation relevant to palliative care practice
- Advocate for access to quality palliative care for all.

Participate in activities to develop self and services in the provision of palliative care

- Recognise how personal values, beliefs and experiences of dying and death affect professional responses and interactions with people affected by life-limiting conditions
- Recognise the need for support for self and others in palliative care
- Use self-care strategies and provide support for others
- Participate in continuing education and learning to improve the quality of palliative care
- Practise evidence-based palliative care.



PALLIATIVE CARE EDUCATION & TRAINING COLLABORATIVE



For more information, including references, scan QR code

