

The role of the Spiritual Care Team

Spiritual Care Team

The basic role of the Spiritual Care Team is to be involved with others in the provision of holistic care within the Hospice community.

'Holistic care' is concerned with the whole person and includes not only a person's physical health but also their social, psychological, emotional and spiritual health and well being.

The Spiritual Care Team are pastoral practitioners who seek to build a relationship of trust through compassionate presence and thereby offer help and support to a wide range of people. Such support might (for example) focus on the emotional or spiritual adjustment to illness or on the search for meaning and purpose through difficult times. Help in crisis situations, including family/relational issues as well as bereavement care, are regular areas of Spiritual Care Team involvement.

The Spiritual Care Team work collectively and collaboratively alongside other health care professionals to provide psycho-social-spiritual services for patients and their families. The Spiritual Care Team receive regular patient referrals from our staff and contribute to patients overall care through regular involvement and liaison with members of multi disciplinary teams.

The Spiritual Care Team's specialty is to possess a particular understanding of the relationship between faith, illness, and the emotional and mental conflicts that might arise. A team member seeks to motivate and initiate meaningful use of each individual's beliefs and attitudes in the management of their difficulties. The Spiritual Care Team's role is supportive, serving as a counsellor and guide to the psycho-spiritual needs of the staff and patients.

The Spiritual Care Team's ministry to the patients is a prime responsibility but often, they will also come into contact with the patient's family and be able to respond to their needs as required.

Involvement with hospital staff forms another major area of pastoral responsibility for the Spiritual Care Team. They are always available for staff support and advice and are often involved in staff reflection.

The primary focus of the Chaplaincy team is to be available to people of all faiths and none where they are and support them by:

Listening, exploring questions, searching with them, remembering with them and praying with them.

Facilitating religious and cultural care including:

- Sacraments
- Rituals
- Blessings
- Weddings
- Anniversaries
- Funeral Planning
- Connecting with all faith communities

- Supporting families, relatives and carers
- Supporting staff as they support others
- Supporting organisational events

Key areas of focus

Patients

- developing an integrated pastoral care ministry of support, guidance, nurture and encouragement
- providing information on faith traditions and access to resources and rituals
- assisting patients to cope with the psychological, social and spiritual aspects of their illnesses and difficulties arising from them
- helping identify spiritual and religious 'filters'
- offering counselling services related to problems/issues that patients might share with a professional religious worker eg fear of death, guilt, and forgiveness
- acting as a facilitator between patients and hospital staff, or family and patient, or family and staff, as required
- serving as a religious resource person for the patient
- inviting patients to express feelings and explore the meaning of their experience e.g. about an illness or other life stress
- working with family and friends for their own healing and support of their loved one
- exploring spiritual resources for rehabilitation, healing and growth

Staff

- working with staff to support clients
- providing pastoral care services to the staff of the hospital
- establishing a training function for those staff interested in personal development in the area of psycho-social-spiritual concerns
- facilitating groups of staff for team building and debriefing
- participating in case conferences regarding patients and/or problem areas
- helping other professionals identify and attend to their own needs and issues, by providing staff support and valuing their particular contribution
- serving as a resource for those addressing the complex ethical issues involved in making healthcare decisions

Church and community relations

- available to faith groups addressing end of life care issues and developing support groups within the faith community
- developing the role of volunteers within the area of spiritual care.
- Actively developing relationships with the various faith/culture groups in the community which the Hospice serves

Ecumenism within the Spiritual Care Team

For the vast majority of people who find themselves in the Hospice, the particular denomination of the members of the Spiritual Care Team is not important. What is needed is that the person is someone who provides relevant spiritual and pastoral care to the person in need at that time, those with faith and those with none. The team maintain good relations with ministers and clergy from local churches and places of worship. The Hospice is fortunate to enjoy the unstinting and generous support of all the faith groups in the city of Leeds.