

National End of Life Care Programme End of Life Care Systems Modelling Project (East Midlands)

EoLC Stories that informed the Description of Workforce Needs Using Functional Analysis (2010-11)

The power of working in teams

A 22 year old man was diagnosed with Sarcoma. He was quickly introduced to the community health team due to having a Hickman line inserted, and had the support of a Macmillan Nurse.

After about 1½ years the man went into a hospice, but at the point he was told he was palliative with a matter of weeks to live, he chose to return home to die. He went home with 2 syringe drivers and a huge package of care including Hospice @ Home, nurses, overnight care, GP and Macmillan Nurses. In addition he had a huge social network who gave him a lot of support.

Throughout his care at home, the man had excellent symptom control and the team worked very well together, co-ordinated by the District Nurse. There were a lot of drugs and his regime was complex. His relationship with the team was good and staff and family were able to enjoy some happy times.

Spirituality was very important to the man and he was able to find solace in a calm atmosphere. He remained conscious until he died, and was able to converse until almost the end which gave his mother a lot of support and meant that his symptoms were well managed. The health and social care teams were subsequently invited to the thanksgiving, and his family were very appreciative of the care he had received.

The use of functions means that we can describe the needs of an individual regardless of where those skills will ultimately be drawn from. It is able to respect the contributions of both paid professionals and the friends and family of the patient, as appropriate. Particularly in an instance such as this, social networks can be a great source of care and comfort and these skills should be recognised and used.

Additionally, the high quality of this man's care was only possible through the excellent team working that took place. In describing an individual's skill needs these are then able to be configured in sequences or groupings that work best for the setting.

Want to find out more? Further detail on how we worked with health and social care professionals to describe the care needed for individuals in their last year of life in community settings can be found on the NEdLCP Intelligence Network site (http://www.endoflifecare-intelligence.org.uk/end_of_life_care_models/skills_for_health.aspx).

More detail about the use of functions and competences as a way of reviewing and designing your teams based on patient need can be found at www.skillsforhealth.org.uk, or by contacting pippa.hodgson@skillsforhealth.org.uk.