

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)

Respecting the rights of the individual and ensuring professionals are supported

A team of health and social care professionals worked with a woman with an unhealed leg ulcer who made it clear that she did not wish to be treated. Because of the circumstances it was felt appropriate to have her assessed under the Mental Capacity Act, the outcome of which deemed her capable of making informed decisions about her care in spite of professionals considering it to be inappropriate and unwise.

She had the input of District Nurses and home carers until she died.

The carers both formal and informal were supported following her death and a letter was subsequently received from her family stating their gratitude that their mother's wishes had been adhered to.

Our work was able to record the needs for a number of skills that were essential in this situation:

- *Enable individuals to make health choices and decision regarding their own health or the health of others* – this is fundamental to giving individuals a choice in what happens to them
- *Request investigations to provide information on an individual's health status and needs* – whilst covering a wide range of potential investigations, in this instance this would facilitate the use of a mental capacity assessment
- Quite crucially in the circumstances of this case, all those involved in the lady's care found it difficult to support her in dying in this way. The function *Reflect on and evaluate your own values, priorities, interests and effectiveness* was included as an underpinning principle for all of end of life care. It focuses on using supervision as a way of supporting professionals as they support their patients and clients.

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 NEoLCP 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.