

TITLE

Pediatric Palliative Care for Social Workers

CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS

4 hours

GOALS

Social workers are at the forefront of providing psychosocial care to children and adults. Inevitably, social workers across practice settings will be faced with working with families coping with a life-limiting illness or death of a child. The complexities of working with children who have a life-limiting illness and their families to ease suffering and the burden of illness can be very challenging.

The goal of this class is to educate social workers about the psychosocial needs of children with cancer and other serious illnesses, how serious illness in childhood differs from that in adulthood, how serious illness affects the child and family, and interventions that social workers can use when working with these children and their families.

CLASS OUTLINE

1. Introduction to pediatric palliative care
2. Similarities and differences in palliative care with adults and with children
 - a. Developmental stage
 - b. Loss of assumptive future
 - c. Ambiguous loss
 - d. Autonomy of the patient
3. Understanding the impact of serious illness on the child and family
 - a. Assessment
 - i. Meeting the family where they are
 - ii. Continued and ongoing assessment
 - b. Impact on the patient
 - i. Mental health: anxiety, depression, and guilt
 - ii. Changes in physical functioning
 - c. Parent, family, and caregiver issues
 - i. Family role changes and role confusion
 - ii. Caregiver stress and burden
 - iii. Practical obligations
 - iv. Family obligations, including siblings
4. Empathy vs. sympathy
5. Hope
6. Social work interventions with the child and family
7. Ethical Issues

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

1. Define palliative care and the benefit of palliative care within a pediatric population
2. Identify similarities and differences of palliative care among adult and pediatric populations
3. Identify the impact of a life-limited or serious illness on the family system
4. Describe the cumulative impact of a life-limiting illness on the family system and the multiple factors affecting caregiving.
5. Identify appropriate interventions to assist patients and families with short and long term health care decision making to ensure optimal care