

Developing Skills to Plan for the Future

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Background

Research suggests that Advanced Care Planning (ACP) improves quality of life and leads to better outcomes for both patients and their families. However, evidence suggests that these sensitive conversations often do not occur.¹

Healthcare professionals require support and training around ACP to enable them to feel confident engaging in such discussions²

Aims

Our aim was to improve the opportunities for hospice patients to participate in advanced care planning conversations.

Method

Two members of the nursing team were trained locally in the delivery of ACP teaching sessions, aiming to prepare staff for entering into these sensitive conversations.

We then developed a focus group of multi-disciplinary team (MDT) members to discuss barriers to ACP, and how we could best improve the frequency of these conversations within the hospice.

Documentation was reviewed within the group, and a process of monitoring the use and effectiveness of this documentation was agreed. Posters were developed to be used in patient areas to encourage patients to ask about ACP.

Discussions around embedding ACP into the admissions process and weekly MDT meetings are underway.

Results

So far results have been positive. Hospice staff have reported finding teaching sessions useful, and a new feeling of confidence towards approaching ACP conversations.

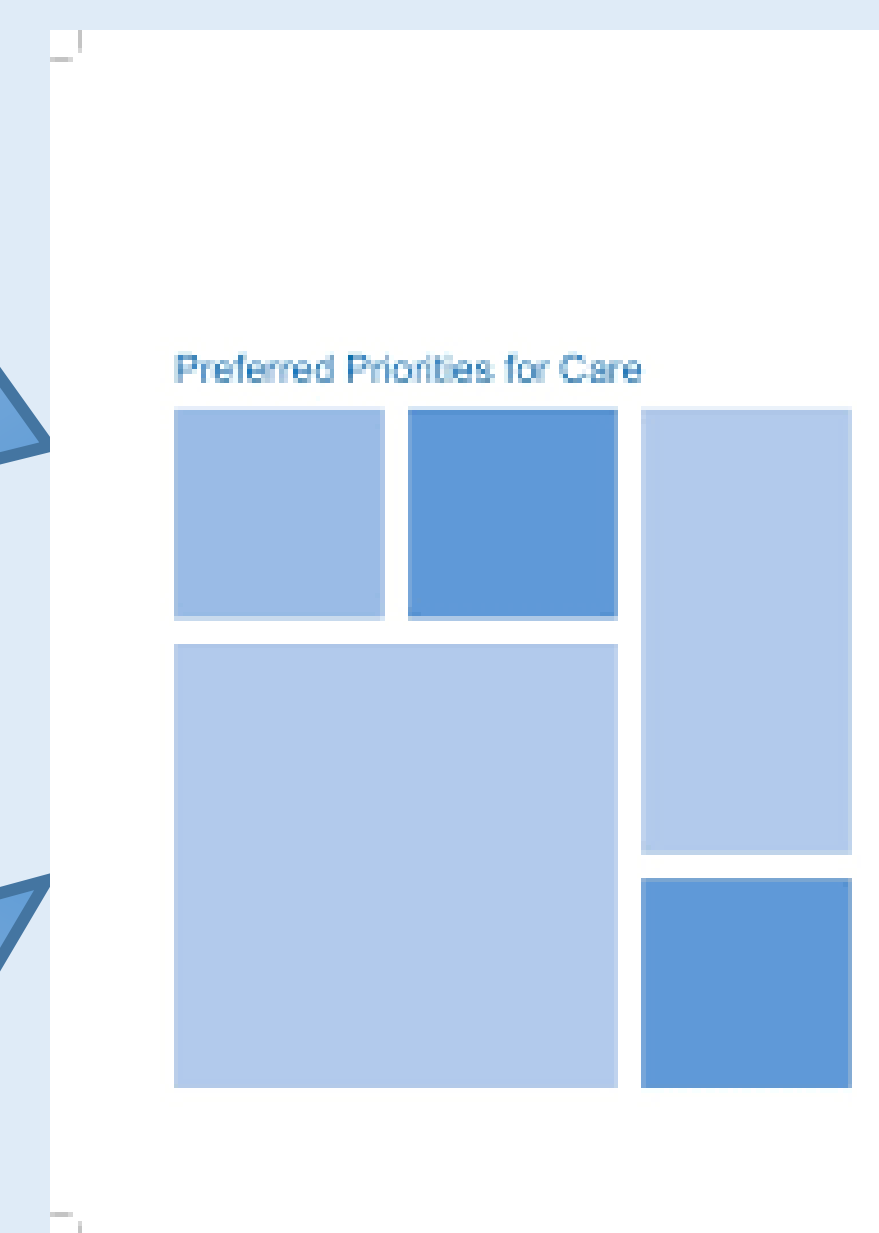
We have seen evidence of more ACP conversations taking place throughout the hospice.

Developing a focus group has allowed us to work at standardising practice throughout the hospice (both Inpatient and outpatient units), and to feedback on progress.

Staff Feedback...

Speak about Advanced Care Planning with patients — have conversations that may be difficult in order to determine patients wishes.

Great session which enhanced my understanding of ACP!



To be more conscious of the need for Advanced Care Plans and the positive impact it can have on providing care to patients.

It's never too early to start thinking about ACP or to ask patients about their ACP.

Conclusion

Our work has demonstrated that by educating and supporting our staff, use of advanced care planning documentation within the hospice has started to increase. So far feedback from patients has been positive.

Work is ongoing. We hope that by developing the skills and confidence of our staff we will provide hospice patients with greater opportunity to discuss their plans for the future.



References

1. Cottingham AH, Beck-Coon K, Bernat JK, Helft PR, Schmidt K, Shields CG, Torke AM, Johns SA (2019). Addressing personal barriers to advance care planning: Qualitative investigation of a mindfulnessbased intervention for adults with cancer and their family caregivers. *Palliative and Supportive Care* 17, 276–285. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478951518000354>
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