



A Guide to Referral

WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

GRIFFITH AREA PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICE

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A GUIDE TO REFERRAL

WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

Definition

Palliative Care involves the management of physical and emotional symptoms, and the provision of social and spiritual support to both clients and carers, from diagnosis and at the relevant stages of a progressive disease, which is beyond the reach of cure.

Principals

- Affirms a life and regards dying as a normal process;
- Neither hastens or postpones death;
- Provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms;
- Integrates the psychological, emotional and spiritual aspects of care;
- Offers a support system to help patients/clients live as actively as possible until death;
- Offers a support system to help the family cope during the patients/clients illness and in their own bereavement.

Who should be referred?

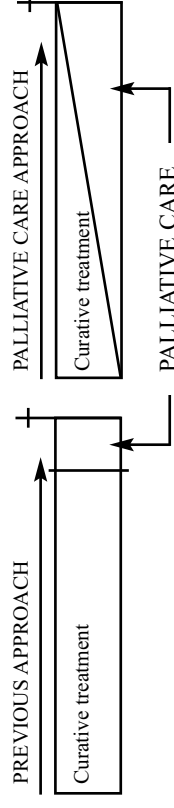
Most patients will have advanced cancer, but other patients with advanced disease of poor prognosis in whom intensive treatment is proving futile should be considered for referral to the Palliative Care Team. This will be especially appropriate if there are worrying symptoms which are not readily alleviated. People with HIV infection, motor neurone disease, chronic end-stage cardiac disease are included in this group.

Referral should have a specific purpose: it may be for advice on symptom control, co-ordination of home and family support, provision of special equipment, family counselling, recruitment of a volunteer or consideration for placement in an in-patient facility.

When should a patient be referred?

It is commonly suggested that palliative care should focus on the three months prior to death, when discomforts and fears are more likely to be troublesome. But prognosis is very inaccurate, and it is often advantageous for a palliative care service to establish contact with a family early in the course of a progressive illness, which will probably go on to cause death.

This model is often used:



Griffith Area Palliative Care Service is a program rather than a place like a hospice or base hospital. The service is responsive to needs as the patient and the family perceive them.

Many in-patient admissions are for assessment and symptom control, with patients discharged home for further care. Often a respite admission of pre-arranged length is suggested to assist families who are exhausted by the demands of care, or are having difficulty coming to terms with the terminal nature of the illness.

A family may wish to continue care at home but lack confidence and knowledge. There may be a need for equipment, which the palliative team can facilitate or provide. A volunteer offering moral support, friendship and the opportunity for a carer to take time out for shopping or respite may be particularly useful.

How to make a referral

There is a single point of access to the
Griffith Area Palliative Care Service
using the

1800 301 999

TELEPHONE HELPLINE

Should you or your relative require any of the services provided,
Please, do not hesitate to contact the service.

Alternatively ask your health care professional
to make the referral on your behalf.