

Supporting a culturally safe approach to Advance Care Planning conversations between clinicians and patients

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Background

The goal of Advance Care Planning (ACP) is for people to get the care that's right for them. Initiating ACP conversations with patients allows healthcare providers to provide person-centred care for their patients. Yet, the literature indicates disparities among culturally diverse communities in rates of ACP engagement. This is of particular importance in BC, where around 30% of British Columbians are from a visible minority group, and 28% have a mother tongue that is neither English or French.

To address this, the BC Centre for Palliative Care (BCCPC) has developed an online learning course to help healthcare providers demonstrate cultural sensitivity and appropriate communication skills when conducting ACP conversations with their culturally diverse patients, in particular patients with a Chinese or South Asian background.

In a larger project, we are adapting and translating a community-based public education model for Advance Care Planning for Chinese and South Asian communities. In anticipation of an activated public, we developed this online learning course.

Approach

To develop the online learning course, we used information gained from a literature review, key informant interviews, focus groups with members of the public from the two communities, input from project working groups (one for each community), and an advisory committee.

The learning objectives for the course are:

- Understand evolution in the concept of ACP and identify current emphases in the ACP process.
- Understand the role of healthcare providers in initiating and facilitating ACP conversations, and how ACP relates to goals of care and serious illness conversations.
- Understand how culture influences the care people receive, and the principle of cultural safety.
- Learn strategies to discuss aspects of culture with patients and families.
- Understand the traditional cultural values relating to ACP, end of life and decision making in the Chinese and South Asian communities in BC.

The course comprises three modules, further detail provided to the right. Basic ACP information is considered a prerequisite to the course.

Tapestry, nonlinear multimodal platform, was selected as the platform for the online learning. Within Tapestry are interconnected nodes, each representing a concept.



Example module content - key takeaways

Culture and health

Culture influences how people see the world around them, including how they view health and illness, how they experience illness and pain, how they seek help and advice relating to their health, what treatment options are preferred, decision-making customs, and communication preferences. This therefore influences a patient's care plan.

Culturally safe care

Culturally safe care is based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power and privilege imbalances inherent in the healthcare system.

Strategies that support culturally safe care:

- **Cultural humility** - a respectful and humble attitude toward other cultures, acknowledging that one's own culture is not 'right' or 'better', but just different than another culture.
- **Self-reflection** - acknowledging and addressing biases, attitudes, assumptions, stereotypes, prejudices, and characteristics.
- **Continuous learning** - about other cultures. Make learning about other cultures a lifelong goal and process.

Incorporate three behaviors in practice:

- **Listen** - practice active listening to understand your patient's needs and help them feel heard and understood.
- **Ask** - ask questions about your patient's culture, including relevant religious and/or traditional cultural practices and beliefs, and communication styles.
- **Respect** - show a respectful and humble attitude toward the patient's perspectives.

Lessons Learned

Culture influences care planning and decision making, especially in our ever-expanding diverse country. Consideration of cultural safety in ACP conversations initiated by clinicians can help their culturally diverse patients get care aligned with their values, beliefs and wishes.

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Culturally safe ACP

Considering a patient's culture and preferences during ACP may involve:

- honouring patients' autonomy, while respecting cultural norms.
- family-based decision-making processes, and patients' delegation of decisions.
- communicating information about serious illness and death subtly instead of explicitly.

Always ask about a patient's cultural beliefs, preferences, and values; never stereotype or make assumptions.

Guidelines for culturally sensitive ACP

Seek understanding

- Understand your patient's preferences for communication.
- Learn about your patient's values, wishes, culture and belief system.
- Explore how your patient's values and wishes relate to health and treatment.
- Understand the patient's views of suffering and quality of life.

Ensure your patient understands you

- Avoid medical jargon.
- Use example scenarios
- If required: use an interpreter; provide translated information.