



### Developing Palliative Care Competencies for Personal Support Workers: An Inclusive Grassroots Approach

By Chris England, PSW, Bethammi Nursing Home, St. Joseph's Care Group

Palliative care is constantly changing, and I have been fortunate to work for an organization that embraces new ideas and supports opportunities for improvement. One of these opportunities is working to create a set of competencies for Personal Support Workers. Competencies are in place for Doctors, Nurses,

Physiotherapists, Spiritual Care to name a few, but not for PSW's who represent the largest numbers working with palliative residents in long-term care. After several PSW interviews conducted by Marg McKee, School of Social Work, Lakehead University, a team was created to develop these competencies. The team consists of 4 PSW's from Bethammi Nursing Home and Marg. We have already invested a great deal of time and effort to this project. Even though we are still in the very early stages, every time we meet to work on the project, it becomes more and more clear why competencies need to exist. Healthy therapeutic relationships between PSW's and residents, as well as trusting relationships with resident families don't happen by accident. It takes time, skill, and a great deal of effort to achieve. Having competencies in place would provide PSW's with a reference and a standard to follow in their efforts to provide the best care possible to our residents at the end-of-life. In addition to supporting PSW's to be effective caregivers and advocates, competencies would also call for greater accountability. The expectations on PSW's seem to grow with each passing year. Competencies will not only list the many skills we already possess, but may also serve to uncover gaps in our continuing education. What I find most exciting about this project is the competencies will stem from input provided by PSW's facing the same day to day challenges that all PSW's share.

### SSHRC Trainee Abby Wickson Griffiths speaks about her experience at the 11<sup>th</sup> Australian Palliative Care Conference



At the beginning of September, I attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Australian Palliative Care Conference in Cairns, Australia. The conference theme was "Diversity: Strengthening Quality Care at the End-of-Life." As a student trainee with the project attending this conference afforded me with several beneficial opportunities. First, I was able to share some of the year one environmental scan findings with an international audience through a poster presentation entitled "Advance care planning and directives in the long-term care setting" resident and family member perspectives." Second, I was able attend

informative talks from internationally renowned palliative care experts as well as practitioners on topics such as advance care planning and dementia at the end-of-life. Third, I was able to connect with a project collaborator, Deborah Parker in order to discuss and plan my upcoming thesis project. Overall, the entire experience was invaluable to my graduate student experience and has provided me with motivation and inspiration for my continuing studies. To view Abby's poster please [CLICK HERE](#).



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## Spiritual Care Initiatives in Allendale & Creek Way Village

Lucinda Landau, MDiv, DMin (cont'd) Spiritual Associate for the QPC-LTC Alliance

### *Allendale LTC, Milton*

An exciting initiative in Spiritual Care is the project partnership with the Ontario Multifaith Council and Allendale Long Term Care. We've just held a focus group with Allendale's Spiritual Care and Palliative Care volunteers as a means to assess volunteer need for support and training. Eight volunteers were present on October 3<sup>rd</sup> for a pizza and pop lunch that preceded the recorded session. After their responses are compiled and general themes identified, I will develop a comprehensive training program in conjunction with Michael Taylor, Clinical Chaplain and educator with the Ontario Multifaith Council. The training will incorporate items that arose in the focus group, including:

- diversity issues,
- spiritual care supportive skills,
- building volunteer identity as part of the caregiving team and
- coping strategies in bereavement support for families and staff.

This initiative will be evaluated as part of a research paper examining how LTC facilities can meet the Spiritual Care needs of residents in a municipal environment that does not have funding for Chaplaincy/Spiritual Care.

### *Creek Way Village LTC, Burlington*

In response to a request from the Family Council at Creek Way Village LTC in Burlington, I am presenting on *Grief in the Later Stages*. After an earlier meeting with the Family Council to fully understand their request, I noted that they also had many questions regarding the logistics of palliation at Creek Way for their loved ones. As a result of this need, Alice Hayhoe, RN, Manager of Resident Care, has also been invited to co-present during the mid-October session to help inform the families.



Patricia Williams, OMC Manager; Michael Taylor, OMC Chaplain & Educator; Imam Abdul Hai Patel, OMC President; Ann Crocker, Allendale Palliative Care Volunteer; Lucinda Landau, Clinical Chaplain Researcher QPC-LTC; and Cheryl Raycraft, Allendale LTC Administrator

## QPC-LTC has hired a Knowledge Broker

The QPC-LTC would like to announce that Jessica McAnulty (past graduate student trainee) is the new Knowledge Broker for the project. During the next year, Jessica will be working on several knowledge translation/transfer activities which include:

- enhancing a project website to be a leading resource in palliative care and LTC
- working with the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) and the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) to disseminate key messages and clinical tools nationally
- plan a national conference in the Fall of 2011 targeting health policy/decision makers
- and, will develop a knowledge translation plan

Alliance members can contact Jessica directly regarding Knowledge translation/transfer activities by email at [jmcanult@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:jmcanult@lakeheadu.ca) or by phone at 807-766-7268.

### **Alliance Meeting**

**Our next Alliance Meeting will be held on November 17<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-4:30pm.**

**Information on how to join the meeting will be sent to your email shortly.**