Hospice Values Competency Preface

National Alliance for Care at Home
allianceforcareathome.org

Underlying the philosophy of hospice care are the values which drive our interactions with patients, families, the community and with each other. These values can be seen, they can be measured and most importantly, they can be acted on. Whether care is provided by a hospice with a census of 20 patients per day or by one with a census of 2500 patients per day, the quality of that care should be the same. It should be grounded in exceptional service, compassion, dignity, excellence, respect for patient and family choice, teamwork and integrity.

With these values as the basis for its work, the Competency Subcommittee of NHPCO's Professional Education Committee has created a Hospice Values Competency. This Competency provides a tool to guide the professional development of hospice staff and volunteers, regardless of their specific job responsibilities. It can be used in orientation, ongoing education, career ladders or professional development plans as well as to determine the competency level of current staff with respect to their understanding of and performance within specific values. More importantly, it creates a paradigm for advancement to which staff and volunteers can aspire.

The values included and detailed in this document were not selected in a vacuum. They are already embraced by many within the field, although the specific language used to describe/define them may vary. They are values lived by large and small hospices, rural and urban hospices and by hospices from all areas of our country.

The process of creating the Competency was dynamic, with Committee members challenging each other to ensure that the qualities that were being described truly reflect the values that undergird our mission and could be evidenced in organizational practice. Because of this, the Competency is a document that will never quite be finished. It is intended to help each hospice in a process of introspection and growth. This will be an ongoing task for both the organization and for the individual.

It is with the spirit of collaboration and a shared commitment to stay true to the foundational values that support and define the hospice philosophy of care and the provision of services to patients, families and communities that this Hospice Values Competency was completed.

Hospice Values Competency Values Definitions

Service:

- Anticipate, identify and respond to the needs of patients, families, communities
- Provide care that is consistent with each patient's/ family's values
- Address and correct service failures

Compassion:

- Recognize suffering and loss as important elements of patients'/families' end-of-life experience
- Demonstrate empathy in the provision of care
- Demonstrate openness/non-judgment in the provision of care
- Facilitate interconnectedness and shared understanding as essential elements in caring

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Dignity:

- Recognize the inherent value of each individual and support his/her self-image, self- identity and right to privacy
- Demonstrate respect in the provision of care
- Recognize and honor the values, customs, traditions, cultural, religious and spiritual beliefs and practices as well as the life experiences, hopes and dreams of patients, families and communities
- Provide care that conforms to expected behaviors, standards of practice, manners and professionalism with respect to patients and families, fellow team members, the organization and the community

Excellence:

- Exceed the expectations of patients, families and communities
- Exceed the standards of quality end-of-life care and regulatory compliance
- Identify and respond to lapses in service and/or quality
- Continually seek to improve care and services to patients, families and communities and one's own professional competence

Patient and Family Choice:

- Include all members of a patient's family as he/she defines them
- Honor and affirm the autonomy of patients and families
- Ensure choices are identified, explained and understood
- Respect patient/family rights and empower them to make informed decisions in concert with their values
- Ensure that patient/family identified and evolving needs are at the heart of the patient/family plan of care

Teamwork:

- Respect each member of the team, the expertise and perspective he/she contributes
- Demonstrate active engagement as a member of a team
- Communicate effectively and work collaboratively to identify and realize goals identified by the patient/family and/or organization
- Hold each other accountable to advance service excellence
- Engage in creative problem-solving to understand and address issues and find solutions
- Support each other
- Challenge each other

Integrity:

- Understand and abide by ethical principles and standards
- Demonstrate excellent stewardship of resources
- Maintain confidentiality
- Maintain accountability to patients, families, team, organization, community

Hospice Values Competency Grid

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COMPETENCY	NOVICE	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
SERVICE	• Identifies and responds to the needs of patients, families (as each patient/family defines them) and communities	• Ensures the identified needs of patients, families (as each patient/family defines them) and communities are being met	• Anticipates the needs of patients, families (as each patient/family defines them) and communities and guides colleagues in meeting them
	• Describes care and services that are consistent with each patient/family and community's unique values	• Provides care and services that are consistent with each patient/family and community's unique values	• Advocates on behalf of patient, family and community to ensure that care and services are consistent with their values
	• Identifies service failures	• Actively engages in service recovery	• Notes trends in service failures and coaches colleagues toward the goal of eliminating service failures
COMPASSION	• Recognizes multi-dimensional (physical, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual) experience of patient/family distress and suffering; identifies interventions available to address distress and suffering	• Assesses patient/family suffering on all levels; provides appropriate interdisciplinary interventions and facilitates community referral(s) as needed	• Recognizes when suffering exceeds the hospice scope of practice or ability to intervene and guides team in responding appropriately
	• Identifies empathy, active listening, authentic presence, kindness and understanding as central to the provision of hospice care	• Practices empathy and demonstrates skills in active listening, authentic presence and relating with kindness and understanding	• Serves as a role model for empathic practice, utilizing active listening, authentic presence, kindness and understanding, especially in difficult or challenging situations
	• Describes the importance of receptive, judgment- free approaches to practice	• Demonstrates receptive, judgment- free approaches to practice and services that describe rather than evaluate (label) others and the choices they make	• Serves as a role model for colleagues and the community in practice and providing services that are receptive, judgment-free and that describe rather than evaluate (label) others and the choices they make, especially in difficult or challenging situations
	• Acknowledges the human capacity for caring; describes patient, family and community expectations for care and the importance of connection	• Demonstrates caring in all interactions; assesses patient, family and community expectations for care and develops plans to meet them; facilitates interconnectedness	• Serves as a role model, encouraging team members in their development of caring responses; engages individuals, teams and the organization in responding to patient, family and community expectations

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COMPETENCY	NOVICE	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
DIGNITY	• Articulates the value of every person	• Practices in a manner that reflects the value of every person	• Expands individual, team and organizational understanding of the value of every person
	• Identifies behaviors that respect and support self-image, self-identity, self- worth and privacy with respect to patient and family	• Demonstrates behaviors that respect and promote self-image, self-identity, self- worth and privacy with respect to patient and family	• Guides the team and organization in ensuring that respect is demonstrated and that self-image, self-identity, self- worth and privacy are respected for patient and family receiving care
	• Acknowledges the importance of unique characteristics of patient, family and community (values, customs, traditions, culture, religious and spirituality beliefs and practices, life, experiences, hopes and dreams) and how they influence the end-of-life care experience	• Utilizes the unique characteristics of patient, family and community (see novice) to contribute to the development of a plan to meet identified needs	• Expands the team's understanding of patient, family and community's unique characteristics (see novice); challenges individuals, teams and the organization to further their understanding
	• Articulates expected behaviors, manners and professionalism with respect to patient and family, fellow team members, the organization and the community	• Consistently demonstrates expected behaviors, manners and professionalism with patient and family, fellow team members, the organization and the community	• Serves as a role model within the organization and community; teaches others about expected behaviors, manners and professionalism with patient and family, fellow team members, the organization and the community
EXCELLENCE	• Identifies principles of quality service and intent to exceed expectations of the patient, family and community	• Demonstrates the principles of quality service and exceeds patient, family and community expectations	• Advocates for the principles of quality service and expands organizational understanding of exceeding expectations
	• Understands quality service standards in end-of-life care and the value of evidence-based care; identifies practices that exceed standards and that are in compliance with regulatory requirements; adheres to professional practice standards	• Practices in accordance with evidence-based standards that promote quality in end-of-life care, exceeds expectations and demonstrates compliance with regulatory requirements and professional practice standards	• Advocates change that promotes quality and exceeds standards in end-of-life care through evidence-based practice and research; works to influence health policy as appropriate

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COMPETENCY	NOVICE	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
EXCELLENCE (cont.)	• Identifies and communicates instances where principles of service and/or quality service standards have not been met	• Participates in the analysis of instances where principles of service and/or quality service standards have not been met and identifies opportunities for improvement	• Identifies practices, processes and trends in quality and continually seeks to improve care and services to patient, family and community
	• Participates in opportunities to increase professional knowledge, competence and practice in meeting patient/family and community needs	• Collaborates with colleagues to identify professional development needs and helps develop learning activities to advance knowledge, competence and practice in meeting patient/family and community needs	• Identifies practice gaps and participates in the design, delivery and evaluation of professional development activities created to address them; facilitates collaboration with community providers of educational and research activities to advance knowledge of end-of-life care
PATIENT AND FAMILY CHOICE	• Understands the principle of "family as the unit of care" and need for inclusiveness of all identified family members	• Assists patient/family in identifying and involving their family of choice as defined by the patient for purposes of hospice care	• Facilitates a process to identify roles, responsibilities, involvement (and limitations as appropriate) between and among the patient, family and interdisciplinary team to meet plan of care goals
	• Describes the importance of honoring and affirming patient/family autonomy	• Applies the principle of autonomy to the care planning process; ensures that the plan of care is rooted in patient/family choice and autonomy	• Is skilled in honoring and affirming patient and family autonomy; challenges team when autonomy is not honored/affirmed in the care planning or care delivery process
	• Explains the importance of patient/family choice and identifies methods for how choices are identified, explained and understood	• Seeks feedback from patient/family to ensure choices are identified, explained and understood; promotes patient/family choices with the team	• Advocates for patient and family, ensuring their choices are identified, explained and understood by the broader medical community/practitioners
	• Describes the importance of patient/ family-identified values and their role in the decision-making process	• Helps patient/family identify/articulate their values and make informed choices in concert with their values	• Challenges the interdisciplinary team to honor patient/family values and choices; assists team in resolving conflicts
	• Describes the purpose of the plan of care and recognizes patient/family participation in its development and evolution as needs change	• Guides patient and family in considering options and choices available to them and ensures plan of care reflects changing needs	• Anticipates and prepares patient/ family and team for the prospect of changes; anticipates needs and expected decisions and ensures that they are reflected in the plan of care

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COMPETENCY	NOVICE	PROFICIENT	EXPERT
TEAMWORK (encompasses all teams within the organization in addition to the IDT)	• Understands the importance of respecting all staff/volunteers and recognizes the value of the expertise and perspective each contributes to the organization	• Demonstrates respect for each member of the organization and acknowledges the expertise, perspective and contribution of each person; demonstrates inclusion and professionalism	• Serves as a role model, demonstrating respect for each member of the organization, acknowledging and promoting the expertise, perspective and contribution of each person; challenges others when disrespect is noted
	• Understands the value of being an engaged member of a team.	• Demonstrates the value of being an engaged member of a team.	• Leads and models the value of being an engaged member of a team.
	• Recognizes the value of working collaboratively to identify, work toward and realize organizational patient/family and community goals	• Practices collaboratively to identify, work toward and realize organizational, patient/family and community goals	• Guides, facilitates and mediates collaborative processes to identify, work toward and realize organizational, patient/family and community goals
	• Articulates the importance of accountability in teamwork and performance excellence	• Provides judgment-free feedback to colleagues and is receptive to feedback received; practices and promotes accountability for self and teammates in the service of performance excellence	• Models and facilitates processes and practices that encourage accountability for team members and promote performance excellence
	• Understands the value of creative problem-solving	• Demonstrates creative problem-solving skills	• Teaches, guides, and facilitates creative problem-solving; mediates when needed in challenging situations
	• Understands the importance of affirming team strengths and providing support* to team members	• Identifies and affirms team strengths through teamwork practice and supports team members through words and deeds	• Serves as a role model for the team, pointing out and developing the team's strengths and supporting team members in an active and intentional manner
	• Understands the importance of challenging each other toward improved performance and professional development	• Demonstrates the ability to respectfully challenge team members in order to improve performance and develop professionally	• Seeks out and provides new opportunities for team members to improve performance and develop professionally

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INTEGRITY	• Understands ethical principles and abides by organizational standards for ethical practice	• Applies ethical standards to daily practice and seeks consultation for ethical dilemmas	• Serves as a role model for ethical practice; consults with team members when ethical dilemmas arise. Participates in organization's Ethics Committee (as appropriate)
	• Understands stewardship** and the importance of using resources (time, supplies, personnel, etc.) conscientiously	• Models stewardship in all areas of practice and job function	• Promotes stewardship and identifies creative approaches and helps team focus the conscientious utilization of resources
	• Maintains confidentiality in concert with regulations and technological advances	• Models the highest standards of confidentiality in all areas of practice and job function and addresses confidentiality breeches appropriately	• Anticipates changes that may impact confidentiality practice (i.e. technology, regulation, job/organizational expansion); leads efforts to address confidentiality challenges and to solve problems around confidentiality
	• Understands the concept of accountability*** within a hospice environment and the responsibility it carries	• Is accountable to patient and family, team, organization and community within the scope of professional practice	• Advocates for and expands understanding of being accountable to all constituencies; addresses lapses in accountability toward the goal of improved performance

*Support is a timely and intentional act or process between and among interdisciplinary team members and inter-professionals that creates opportunities for restoration, recovery, improved performance, personal and professional growth, and increased well-being based on the specific and unique needs of the individual and/or the team.

**Stewardship is an ethic that embodies responsible planning and management of resources.

***Accountability is the acknowledgment and assumption of responsibility for actions and decisions within the scope of one's role or position, including the obligation to be honest; to follow through; to report, explain and be answerable to oneself and others for the resulting consequences; and to ensure that patient, family, organizational and community expectations have been met.