

How to overcome barriers in providing spiritual care to patients

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Aims:

- Identify barriers in relation to the nurse/health care worker, the patient and the organisation where care is provided
- The participants get knowledge and tools so they can learn from and better overcome barriers
- Learn from participants across Europe how different barriers vary in different countries

In the literature 3 main barriers are reported:

1. Barriers in me – the health care professional
2. Barriers related to the patient
3. Barriers related to institution/profession

1. Barriers in me

- Who am I? Self awareness
- Understanding of role and professional responsibility: General and special competence
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of experience
- Own spiritual growth
- To work in a team and refer patients to others

General and special competence

- General competence

- Builds on professional values and guidelines= is for everybody
- Identify spiritual concerns and resources + view of life
 - Listen, support, encourage
 - Arrange for what is needed
 - Collaborate with patient on how to use resources
 - Refer to others

- Special competence

- Personal – related to faith, experience and knowledge
 - Makes you go further and deeper together with a patient
- Important with openness in the team regarding special competence!
 - Leenderts 1997

2. Barriers related to the patient

- How to evaluate patient's expectations and needs
- To respect – how to help without crossing patient's limits/boundaries. Risking rejection
- Short time – challenging to build relationship
- Difference in life view

3. Barriers related to institution, co-workers, profession

- Professional standard – culture in the team, hospital policy
- Attitude in society and mirrored in health care
- Short time, busy working situation
- Silence in the team related to spirituality in professional discussion, reports and documentation
- Lack of role models
- Poorly developed professional language
- Professional expertise related to spirituality is turned into personal issue

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