# Overcoming Barriers to Palliative Care and End-of-Life Communication in the Congestive Heart Failure Population

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## Background
- A 40 bed telemetry/intermediate care unit has seen an increase in Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) admissions. The units population includes patients in all stages of the disease process from newly diagnosed to end-of-life.
- The unit base council requested nursing and patient education.
- Attention to optimizing treatment.
- Communication techniques for patient education with goal to better manage progression and prevent readmissions.
- Pharmacologic education regarding use of medications that prolong life and alleviate symptoms.

## Objectives
- State the prevalence and burden of heart failure on patients, families and the healthcare system
- Outline and anticipate the disease trajectory of heart failure and its impact on prognosis and treatment
- Identify and address the sources of suffering for patients and families dealing with heart failure

## Theoretical Framework
- David A. Kolb’s: Experiential Learning Theory
- Jean Watson’s: Theory of Human Caring

## Project Description
- An assembled team which included Directors of Palliative Care, Simulation and Pharmacy developed a series of videos.

### Videos
- Addressing frequently asked questions from family and patients.
- Common changes and symptoms seen in the final days of life.
- Transition to palliative care and comfort measures.

### Simulation scenarios
- Involved a 1:1 scenario with family members asking pointed questions based on videos
- Patient and family education using the teach back method

## Teach-Back as an Educational Tool
- A method to encourage the healthcare provider to validate understanding of education; it is not a test or quiz for patients
- In a caring manner, teach-back asks patient (or family member) to explain – in his or her own words – what he or she needs to know or do.
- A method to check for understanding and, if needed, re-explain and check again
- Patients should be able to show / demonstrate understanding.
  It is not enough to ask “Do you understand?” or “Do you have any questions?”

## Conclusion of Project
Upon completion of all CAPC training modules and attendance at the Institute for Simulation Learning, a post-survey was conducted, following the debrief session.

## Program Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Number of Participants: 39</th>
</tr>
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The following objectives have been met:
1. Identify sources of suffering for the Patient and family throughout the disease trajectory. Rating: 4.97
2. Discuss mechanisms and actions of Comfort care medications seen in the heart failure patient. Rating: 4.97
3. Demonstrate and assess appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills with the HF patient. Rating: 4.97

## Outcomes

- CHF Readmission Within 30 Days
- CVD:CHF Re-Admission Data