

134 COMMUNICATION TOWARDS THE END-OF-LIFE: A NOVEL WAY TO ENHANCE EDUCATION

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Caring for patients and their family towards the end of life can be both a challenging and rewarding experience for all involved. Initiating a conversation about end of life care needs was practiced through a novel, exciting and unique education session, aimed at enhancing confidence in this area of care.

Four hospitals across metropolitan Melbourne are piloting an end of life care practice change project based on the Liverpool Care pathway. Education plays a vital role in achieving practice change and as such an actor was hired to help the participants think and act outside their comfort zones. Nurses representing each of the 4 hospitals were invited to practice how they would initiate a conversation with a patient as they enter the last days of their lives.

The role play gave participants a safe forum to practice strategies and to focus on responding to psychosocial distress including depression, anxiety, anger and denial. Benefits of the session included recognising non-verbal cues, using attentive body language, acknowledging feelings and being able to use silence comfortably. Participants felt that using this way to teach communication skills was useful and beneficial in learning ways and techniques of listening to what our patients and their carers need as they enter this phase of life.