



Hospice
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Forever Love, Endless Care

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A woman humming along with the melody, swiping on her iPad screen

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Happy New Year

2016



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The Invisible, Serene Force

-A note from a 2015 Asia Pacific Hospice Conference hospice volunteer, Feng-ying

by **Feng-ying Chen**

A colorful feather surrounded by a description of “Hospice Volunteers in Taiwan” was the simple yet impressive logo shown in the 2015 APHC venue. This logo represents the invisible, serene power brought by the Taiwanese hospice volunteers.

Ching-shiu, who regularly provides volunteer service in Mackay Hospice and Palliative Care Ward, gives this logo a wonderful depiction:

“The shape of the feather represents Taiwan. The feather itself represents the medical palliative team, and we, the volunteers, are there to fill the unfilled corners of the feather, just as we do to fill in the manpower shortage to complete it as a team. The feather can be as light as a goose feather, just as hospice volunteers scatter in various hospitals; it can also cause mighty gravity when all the volunteers are striving for a common goal and serve the terminally ill patients. Furthermore, these feathers can turn into the wings of an angel. The purpose of this conference is to demonstrate the strength the feathers can generate and the angelic hearts of the contributing volunteers”.

A simple logo yet carries such abundant meaning. This shows not only the essence of hospice volunteers, but also the role played by the volunteers who participated in the 2015 APHC.

By the invitation of the Hospice Foundation of Taiwan and the encouragement of Ching-shiu, Feng-ying happily took part of 2015 APHC. All the volunteers who participated were from Mackay Memorial Hospital, National Taiwan University Hospital, Cardinal Tien Hospital, Taichung Veteran General Hospital, Lotus

Foundation, Catholic Sanipax Foundation and more. They worked side by side as they had already known each other for some time. All they wanted was to share their 20 years of experience with visitors from abroad. In these four days, the 2015 APHC re-strengthened the reasons why Feng-ying chose to devote herself to hospice volunteering service and many others.

What impressed Feng-ying the most were the balloon doctor and nurse standing in the venue hall to greet participants. After she looked around, there were many balloons transformed into butterflies, hearts, flowers and so many different things. This really lit up the



Logo for hospice volunteers in Taiwan



Free Balloons Giveaway: various balloons provided by passionate volunteers

venue and brought a lively atmosphere. After Feng-ying's further inquiry, all these delicate artworks were from the hands of a group of volunteers led by Lin-ju. These balloons in their various styles showed the vigorous and vibrant side of the volunteers.

All the volunteers were separated into groups such as onsite assistance/ guidance, aromatherapy, sand wishing bottles, storytelling, balloons and book stands. Besides showing eagerness to serve and their friendly smiles, volunteers also provided the same high level of professional service to visitors as is normally provided to patients.

She recalled the volunteers onsite prepared many colored salts to invite everyone in making their own wishing bottles. As a final touch, the volunteer tied a ribbon on the bottle to remind visitors of the hope in their hands and smile on their faces.

As for storytelling, this was a must learned skill to help patients stay in palliative ward to relax. Most of us are now well trained by experiences and are able to share the story with lively intonation and body language; this often brings laughter to the wards with joy.

Terminally-ill patients usually suffer from pains, edema, and abdominal distention. Volunteers often use essential oils to perform lymphedema massage, with the soothing scents of the essential oils to ease the discomfort. Not only do they bring comfort to the patients, but the skilled massaging motions also help patients to sleep better at night and feel the warmth in their hearts. To share this massage with more people at AHPC, the volunteers prepared wheelchairs onsite to invite guests to sit on and experience this therapeutic massage for their hands, feet or even abdominal areas. Watching volunteers arching their backs, being massaging

attentively, and asking for nothing in return is just as Jesus says in the Bible: "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Though there is still a lot to learn about hospice and palliative care, volunteers are still willing to give everything they have. After this brief exchange of experiences with volunteers from other countries, Feng-ying believes this has reaffirmed her determination to carry on her service as hospice volunteer, and assist even more patients with their final days.



Paper folding, a subtle way to express feelings



Greeting balloon doctor and nurse await your arrival at 2015 APHC conference hall

Forever Love, Endless Care

The latest documentary of hospice home care

by *HFT secretariat*

A woman humming along with the melody, swiping on her iPad screen, and gazing at her granddaughter's



A happy night out with families, what more can you ask for

laughter with such affection; this is how the latest documentary released by Hospice Foundation of Taiwan called Forever Love, Endless Care starts. The protagonist, Chiang, smiles with happiness when she talks about her lovely granddaughter.

In fact, cancer cells have spread throughout her organs, and she is determined to go home for her final hours to be surrounded by her family, or more specifically, by her granddaughter's laughter.

Many cancer patients or terminally ill patients are hoping to be like Chiang. When the acute symptoms and pain are relieved and stabilized, they want to get back to their family and enjoy

the last days in the most familiar places. In Chinese culture, we still value the tradition of “fallen leaves return to the soil”, which makes “dying at home” an idea regarded as dying well.

Hospice home care has been designed to fulfill the needs of respecting the patients' will and dignity. When patients' symptoms are controlled, hospice home care can be a preferred choice of the patients. The main caretakers will receive basic training to care for the patients at home while palliative care teams from the hospitals will also visit regularly to provide diagnosis, medicine, and comfort care. By this mutual cooperation, we wish to ensure the safety of terminally ill patients who stay at home without adding anxiety to the family and caretakers.

Sponsored by the International Commercial Bank of China Cultural and Educational Foundation, Hospice Foundation of Taiwan has spent a year observing palliative care teams. The latest documentary provides a close-up look on how hospice home care will be. In this 25-minute long documentary, the director shows the anxieties and worries of patients' families gradually leading to mutual trust with the palliative care team. The



Chiang, though confined physically, her spiritual was still optimistic and free

regular visits of palliative care team members provide professional medical care and advices to the families and through their daily conversations, the relationship becomes like that of a friend visiting rather than someone who is cold and professional.

In order to lift the veil for people to understand more about hospice home care, Hospice Foundation of Taiwan will hold five public showings across Taiwan, and everyone, both young and old, is welcome to join us! There will also be palliative professionals to introduce more details about hospice home care. So come and grab a chair!



Chiang's husband waited patiently and remained accompany

How to Provide Spiritual Care to Terminally Ill Patients

by **Jeng-fong Chiou**

Board of Hospice Foundation of Taiwan

Vice Superintendent of Taipei Medical University Hospital

Dr. John Miller, who spends his entire life on dying well research, defined a “good death” as “dying without regrets and with a peaceful spiritual mind”. For a doctor who has cared for thousands of patients, Dr. Miller specifically endorsed the “spiritual” aspect of dying. Though the medical skills and equipment in Taiwan have advanced in recent years, not everyone can be assured of a good death. The key to this question, I believe, has to do with having a peaceful spiritual mind.

The spirituality of people has many different aspects, each of which requires its fulfillment. However, as people grow older with more experience, their satisfaction will be different, too. If spiritual needs are not being satisfied, this will cause “spiritual distress”. Hence, spiritual gratification needs to be affirmed and reinforced until the very last second of people’s lives. Spiritual care is helping people fulfilling their spiritual needs by resolving their distresses and balancing their spirits.

The oncology team from the Taipei Medical University Hospital has concluded the *Five Aspects and Three Stages* of spiritual care from their 17 years of consultation experience with terminally ill patients and their families. With this guide, the oncology team hopes to provide a general yet solid theory for clinical spiritual care professionals to further analyze and discuss the spiritual care process.

● Aspect 1: The Meaning of Life and Its Value

Everyone wishes to find the meaning and value of their lives, and to understand the purpose behind all of this. Many live their lives in difficulties, but can’t find meaning in life and are left with regrets. Many even seem accomplished by social standards, yet still feel frustrated for not finding the core values in life.

In the following story, we shall demonstrate how clinical professionals can assist terminally ill patients to find the meaning of their lives through guidance, and help the patients define their lives as valuable and full.

“The Flavor of Childhood Memories - Oyster Vermicelli”

Uncle Wang, a 67 year-old terminal liver cancer patient, feels there is no point to carry on with his dull life and asks the nurses frequently: “Is there any way for me to die earlier pain free?”.

One day I ask him: “Is there anything you would like to do and would feel happy that you have done it?”

“Yes” he replies. “If I could have a taste of that oyster vermicelli from my childhood one more time, I would be very, very happy. I miss that taste a lot.”

The search team forms quickly and sets off to Uncle Wang’s neighborhood in search of the oyster

vermicelli. Of course, the neighborhood has changed much, and the oyster vermicelli stand has moved too. With further investigation, the team finally learns that the food stand has developed into a restaurant. The search team tells the owner the story behind this mission and the owner is very touched and wants to offer oyster vermicelli for free.

In the end, the team brings back 20 bowls of oyster vermicelli to the ward. While everyone is enjoying this local gourmet, I ask Uncle Wang “Why do you like oyster vermicelli so much?”

“My family was poor while I was young, but as long as I could have a bowl of oyster vermicelli, I felt like I have everything.” He continues, “My family was poor and unable to provide me an education so I had to start earning money at a very young age. When I got married, I worked even harder so that my children could have a better childhood than I did and do something greater with their lives.”

“So are you happy and proud of your children now?”

“I am satisfied. Nobody is perfect, though I do wish better for them. It is good to see they’ve all graduated from college, set up their own families and are able to support themselves, unlike me back in those days...”

“You seem to have devoted your life to make sure your children have a better future, and this is not an easy thing to do,” I interrupt.

“Really? It isn’t an easy thing to do?” He looks at me as if he wants affirmation.

“No, this is not easy at all! Because of your hard work, you have significantly improved the financial status of your family. Not only have you gotten rid of poverty, but also provided better living conditions for your children’s future,” I say.

“You really think so?” as his changed intonation indicates excitement.

“Yes, of course. You can ask others and hear how they think about this.” By the time I finished my sentence, my colleagues echo one after another: “You are such a wonderful father!”

In the days that follow, his spirit turns high because he has just discovered that he has achieved a very important and meaningful task in his life; that is, he has improved his family’s financial status and has provided his children with more opportunities—this is the meaning of his existence.

Based on the case above, there are three basic steps for spiritual care:

Step 1 is to identify the problem. Find out what is distressing the patient’s value of life. People who provide spiritual care need empathy to be in the patient’s shoes so as to unravel what might be distressing patients.

Step 2 is to admit and accept circumstances. The patient needs to recognize the cause of his distress. If the patient doesn’t recognize the cause being pointed out by the spiritual professional, the spiritual care wouldn’t be meaningful.

Step 3 is to confront and solve the problem. This process determines the final statement of his life and value.

When all of these three steps are complete, Aspect 1 is complete.

● **Aspect 2: Hope**

The second aspect of spiritual care is hope. The hope of patients is mostly to alleviate their symptoms, extend their lives, and complete their to-do lists. In contrast, patients who feel suicidal are often those who have lost hope. If people have no hope for the future and are constantly tormented by illness, then they often end up in despair.

This is why people need to be able to anticipate and look forward to something valuable in their lives, because this tiny thread of hope is like the beacon inside of us showing the way forward. Spiritual needs are often the harmony of self, or with others, or with gods. Whether our souls continue to live on or reincarnate, we all wish to reside in the heavens (universally defined).

● **Aspect 3: Forgiving and Forgiven**

Everyone has experience of being misunderstood or has done something regrettable; as a result, people need to forgive someone else or need be forgiven by someone else. In Western culture, when people know there isn't much time left, they tend to take the initiative to write an apology letter, hoping to leave this world with no regrets and be burden free. Chinese people are more held back with their emotions and tend to be more passive, waiting for others to take the initiative and bring up the matter first; however, they often end up taking this regret with them to their graves.

In fact, if we cannot take in others, we will not be taken in as well. Taking in someone is the first step to forgiving that person. And without forgiveness, it is hard to achieve balance with the anger and guilt inside us, not to mention the balance of spiritual needs. When taking care of patients with this tendency, this is usually the easiest starting point to provide spiritual care; that is, help patients to confront and deal with their emotions, and then to take action.

● **Aspect 4: To Love and Be Loved**

There are many kinds of love, such as the love of family, relatives, friends, colleagues or church fellows. When people feel they are being loved, they will have real love for others as well. This kind of love satisfies people's spiritual needs a great deal. This is why care professionals need to help patients discover their love toward others in their final days, and also help them to feel the love and care from others.

● **Aspect 5: Relationship between the Spiritual and the Gods**

Where do we go after we die? Where does our soul go?

These questions pop up when people are in their final days; some people even started searching for these answers in their youth.

When patients ask "What is the future for me?", the spiritual professional can answer this question from a religious background to support patients and their families. It is important to provide guidance for them to discuss and elaborate on their religions, but without pressure or stress.

Conclusion

Once you comprehend the *Five Aspects and Three Stages*, you can apply this method while you provide hospice and palliative care to any patient and understand what is troubling them through random chats. Help them raise the question, and discover the reason behind this question so as to further analyze and solve their issues. This is the mission of spiritual professional.

There are a total of 15 steps for *Five Aspects and Three Stages*, and each of them needs to be taken individually and gradually. Rushing to the next step will not solve the problem, but will instead bring up more confusion. When visiting patients, you can check at the same time: What is the problem? Which one can be solved now? Which step are you at now?

When you complete this process, you can go home happily for you have found peace for another man's spirit.



Buddhist Chengte Hospital

- The first Palliative specialty hospital in Taiwan expected to fully function in 2018



Buddhist Chengte Hospice Hospital

by *HFT secretariat*

A groundbreaking ceremony for the first specialty hospital that provides exclusively for palliative care took place in central Taiwan in September. With years of planning and over half a year of back and forth paper work with the government, the Buddhist organization Chengte Cancer Medical

Foundation has raised NT2 million in charitable funds for the construction of Chengte Hospital, which is expected to fully function in 2018.

The hospital is currently under construction and will eventually have eleven floors in the building with three basements levels. It will cover an area of 4,132.25 square meters (44,479 square feet) and is expected to provide 90 beds, which is extraordinary since most hospitals can only afford 10-20 beds at most due to the high cost and low profits of running a hospice facility and little NHI premiums support from the government.

Master Yen-Yin, the Chairman of Chengte Cancer Medical Foundation, stresses that since the hospital is constructed by the good will and charity of the public, the hospital will publicize its financial statements to the public on a monthly basis. He also says that as long as the hospital can make ends meet, patients will not be charged any fees although their freewill offerings will be accepted.

Chengte Hospital aims to provide care for advanced cancer patients and non-cancer terminally-ill patients; it will have eight outpatients including family medicine, general medicine, rehabilitation, pain management, palliative care and more. It will be the first independent specialty hospital providing palliative care; all of its ninety beds will be assigned to terminally-ill patients, who require palliative care only. With its cooperation with Lotus Foundation to extend service into nearby communities, more patients will be able to receive care at the end-of-life phase and ensure a quality death and peaceful way of saying goodbye. Once in service, the hospital will keep the nurse-to-bed ratio at 1:1.



A bird view blueprint for Chengte Hospice Hospital

As the hospital is founded by a local Buddhist organization, future training and active participation of Buddhist chaplains are highly expected; this will hopefully fill in the relatively weak gap of the Buddhist chaplaincy system in Taiwan.

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