Course Syllabus

RNSG 1193 – End of Life Issues

Catalog Description: Lecture Hrs. – 1, Lab Hrs. – 0
This class explores the issues that come about at the end of life. The nursing profession, as well as other professional disciplines, are key participants in those events. This course will assist nursing students, in particular, in identifying the needs of the dying patient and family, along with how to meet those needs. In the process, the student will explore individual feelings regarding the end of life.

Prerequisites: No prerequisites required.

Semester Credit Hours: 1
Lecture Hours per week: 1
Contact Hours per Semester: 16

State Approval Code:

Course Subject/Catalog Number: RNSG 1193
Course Title: End of Life Issues

Course Rationale:

Nurses deal with dying patients on a daily basis. Education of how to handle those patients needs to be taught while those students are in training. Death, at one time or another, effects everyone. Nurses become resources for patients, families, and physician’s on how to deal and cope with the dying patient. The process becomes a family centered experience, demanding the need for a person to turn to who could help.

Nurses need to explore the issues that surround a death experience for their own benefit. This would be far more advantageous to complete in a controlled environment, rather than as it actually happens. There are nurses who ignore a
“death situation”, rather than face it. Most often, it is because they did not know what to do. These reasons identify the need for nurses to gain knowledge about the end of life.

Learning Objectives: At the end of this course, the learner will be able to:

1. Discover individual perspectives about end of life issues.
2. Identify the care at the actual time of death to ensure best practices.
3. Discuss the basic principles of palliative care within nursing practice.
4. Discuss the basic principles of pain assessment and management at the end of life.
5. Identify cultural differences in end of life issues to adequately communicate and provide culturally competent care.
6. Discuss key ethical and legal concerns in end of life and palliative care.
7. Emphasize the importance of therapeutic communication at the end of life.
8. Discover the challenging aspects of grief, loss, and bereavement of patients and families, as well as the loss experience of the health care professional.

Specific Course Objectives:

Individual perspective:
1. Assessment of attitudes regarding time of death is helpful to strengthen professional effectiveness.
2. Define personal death awareness and cumulative loss associated with caregiving.

Preparation for and Care at the time of death:
1. Assess dying patients and list five physical signs and symptoms of the dying process and three signs of death.
2. Assess physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs and interventions for a dying patient and their family.

Palliative care:
1. Describe the role of the nurse and other members of the health care team, including the role of nursing assistants, in providing quality palliative care.
2. Identify the need for collaboration with team members when implementing palliative care.
3. Describe the philosophy and principles of hospice and palliative care that can be integrated across healthcare settings to affect quality care at the end of life.
4. Discuss aspects of suffering for patients and families facing a life-threatening illness or event.

Pain assessment and management:
1. Identify barriers to adequate pain relief at the end of life.
2. List components of a thorough pain assessment.
3. Describe pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies used to relieve pain.
4. Discuss the nursing role and nursing assistant role involved in quality pain assessment and management at the end of life.

Cultural indications at the end of life:
1. Identify the influence of culture on end of life and palliative care issues.
2. Discuss beliefs regarding death and dying of different cultures.
3. Recognize the value of respecting cultural diversity at the end of life.

Ethical and legal issues at the end of life:
1. Discuss ethical issues that may arise at the end of life.
2. Describe specific roles of the nurse in making ethical decisions.
3. Describe advance directives and their role in preventing ethical issues at the end of life.

Therapeutic communication:
1. Define the importance of ongoing and therapeutic communication in end of life issues.
2. Identify three factors that influence communication at the end of life.
3. Describe important factors in communicating bad news to patients and families.
4. Identify expectations of healthcare professional by patient and families at the end of life.
Loss, grief, and bereavement:
1. Define loss, mourning, grief, and bereavement.
2. Distinguish between anticipatory grief, normal grief, and complicated grief.
3. Describe three tasks of grief and list five factors that may affect the grieving process.
4. Provide three interventions that may facilitate normal grief.
5. Discuss an understanding of grief and loss relating to complex or traumatic death.
6. Identify four systems of support the nurse can access to assist in coping with death anxiety and loss.

Course Grade:
Each student will “contract” for the grade received in this class. The student will select which grade they want to accomplish and complete the necessary assignments to be given that grade. Contracting will be completed at the first held class time. The following table describes the necessary assignments to be completed for a grade of A, B, or C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For grade of “A”</th>
<th>For Grade of “B”</th>
<th>For Grade of “C”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Write your eulogy (no requirements for length…want quality)</td>
<td>1. Write your eulogy</td>
<td>1. Write your eulogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create your own advanced directive and medical power of attorney…better to notarize</td>
<td>2. Create your own advanced directive and medical power of attorney.</td>
<td>2. Create your own advanced directive and medical power of attorney.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “The Last Lecture”…by Randy Pausch…read the book or view the lecture on youtube.com . Then complete a paper</td>
<td>3. “The Last Lecture”…by Randy Pausch…read the book or view the lecture on youtube.com . Then complete a paper</td>
<td>Complete self-assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Updated Fall, 2013
reviewing what it is about and what personal changes you will make after reading/viewing and why….no length required…want quality

4. “Rights of Dying”…review, describe each and write an intervention for each…not necessarily a nursing intervention, just something as a person you would do to maintain their right

5. Complete self-assessment

Texts, Materials, and Supplies:

“Nursing Care at the End of Life: Palliative Care for Patients and Families”, J.V. Zerwekh. F.A.Davis. 2006

Other resources:

See instructor regarding other resources