

A LEARNING PATH FOR AMBULANCE PERSONNEL

Introduction

In 2012/2013 teams of experienced palliative medicine and end of life care professionals came together to develop and pilot blended learning paths incorporating e-ELCA for staff and volunteers involved in providing end of life care to people across a range of settings in Oxfordshire. These became known as the Oxford Learning Paths (OLPs). The work has now been adapted to enable others to develop local training utilising the work of the Oxfordshire teams as a foundation.

Aims and Purpose

The aim is to enable ambulance services personnel (Emergency Care Practitioners (ECP), Clinical Support Desk Nurses (CSD), Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics) to have an awareness of end of life issues when responding to a situation involving an individual who is receiving palliative care or may be in the last days of life. It is intended to help ambulance services personnel become more confident and competent to deal with situations differing from the majority of scenarios they encounter, which focus on saving life, and realise that to support someone to have a good death should also be seen as a successful outcome. By avoiding inappropriate admissions to hospital, they may be supporting the wishes of the individual and their families in their last days to hours of life. To do this they need to:

- ❖ know and understand how to calm panic and anxiety that may be shown by the individual and their family,
- ❖ understand and manage physical symptoms,
- ❖ know who to contact and locate other resources available for further support.

In 2017 e-Learning for Healthcare launched the Paramedics programme: <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/paramedics/> which includes a module on end of life care. This offers an alternative, complimentary learning path to that described below for this group of ambulance staff.

The Learning Path

The path has two parts. Part A is for **all** ambulance personnel and Part B is for personnel **Band 4 and above** to undertake only after successful completion of Part A. Each part recommends a number of e-ELCA sessions to be undertaken before a group workshop. The workshop focus should be to consolidate the learning from e-ELCA, share experiences and is not intended to cover new areas.

The path recommends two workshops with a suggested duration of around 90 minutes, and it is recommended that the facilitator/mentor supporting the learners and leading the workshops should be an end of life care services specialist. They will have the experience and background to develop the content of the workshops suggested on page 2. Working through aspects of end of life care, especially when drawing on personal or work experiences, may be distressing and it may be useful to provide a follow up debriefing session with a trained facilitator.

Facilitators may find the leaflet 'Five Ways to Motivate and Engage Learners' useful: <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Five-ways-to-motivate.pdf>

e-ELCA sessions and workshops

Click on the session title below to log in and access it on the e-LfH Hub:

Part A for all personnel – e-ELCA sessions to be undertaken prior to attending recommended Part A Workshop					
00_01 Introduction to e-learning for end of life care	00_02 Relationship between palliative care and end of life care	03_10 Things which block good communication	03_05 Culture and language in communication	05_10 Ambulance called to home	
Workshop - Part A for all personnel – Suggested content for blended learning workshop intended to reinforce individual learning – approx. 90 mins					
Introduction to end of life care	Understanding the key principles and approaches in palliative care and end of life care	Discuss why communication is often blocked, who can block it and approaches that can be taken by staff to discover what someone is feeling or why they don't want to talk	Culture and language in communication – discuss the issues that can arise such as when a family member acts as an interpreter, the danger of making assumptions about people's lives, and the language and jargon used	Discussion on the scenario: ambulance called to home	Evaluation, summary and close
Part B – to be undertaken by Band 4 and above personnel on successful completion of Part A – e-ELCA sessions to be undertaken prior to attending the recommended Part B Workshop					
02_13 Assessing urgent situations with limited information	04_20 Management of bleeding	04_21 Management of seizures	04_25 Managing agitation and restlessness in the dying stage	05_14 Sudden unexpected death	
02_14 Assessment of dying phase and after-death			04_23b Symptom management for the dying adult	07_04 Sudden death and bereavement	
Workshop - Part B for Band 4 and above – Suggested content for blended learning workshop intended to reinforce individual learning – approx. 90 mins					
Discuss learning from the session and examples of personal experiences - highlight the most common emergency situations you can come across at end of life	Management of bleeding and seizures can often be discussed together. Perhaps develop a series of questions or a quiz based on the two sessions	Explore physical and psychological cause and management in more detail	Explore experiences and how the ambulance staff debrief afterwards	Evaluation, summary and close	
Optional debriefing session for all staff to be offered with an experienced facilitator					

Note: e-ELCA has sessions around advance care planning which record an individual's wishes including ADRT ([session 01_05](#)), discussing 'do not attempt CPR' decisions ([session 03_30](#)) and a unified DNACPR policy ([session 05_21](#)), which may be useful to improve knowledge of ethical/legal issues especially when transporting individuals at the end of life or in the event of a death whilst being transported.