ELNEC- For Veterans
END-OF-LIFE NURSING EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

Palliative Care For Veterans

Module 3
Symptom Management

PARTICIPANT OUTLINE
Module 3:  Symptom Management  
Participant Outline

I. INTRODUCTION  
A. Essential elements of symptom management  
   1. Assessment and evaluation  
   2. Interprofessional teamwork  
   3. Financial implications  
   4. Indications for diagnostic tests  
   5. Research  
   6. Attention to patient/family suffering  
B. Symptom management in the older adult  
C. Common symptoms seen in myriad serious illnesses and conditions  
D. Veteran era occupational exposures

II COMMON SYMPTOMS  
Respiratory Symptoms  
A. Dyspnea  
   1. Overview/incidence  
   2. Causes  
      a. Pulmonary  
      b. Cardiac  
      c. Neuromuscular  
      d. Other  
   3. Assessment  
      a. Subjective report of patient  
      b. Impact on function and quality of life  
      c. Clinical assessment  
   4. Treatment  
      a. Pharmacologic  
      b. Non-pharmacologic  
B. Cough  
   1. Definition/overview  
   2. Causes  
   3. Management

GI Symptoms  
C. Anorexia/cachexia  
   1. Definition/overview  
   2. Causes  
      a. Disease-related  
      b. Psychological  
      c. Treatment-related  
   3. Assessment  
      a. Physical findings
b. Impact on function
c. Impact on self/family
d. Calorie counts/daily weights
e. Laboratory tests

4. Treatment
   a. Dietary consult/dietary interventions
   b. Medications
   c. Parenteral or enteral nutrition
   d. Problem odors
   e. Counseling

D. Constipation
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
      a. Disease-related
      b. Treatment-related
   3. Assessment
      a. Bowel history
      b. Abdominal assessment
      c. Rectal assessment
      d. Medication review
   4. Treatment
      a. Medications
      b. Dietary and fluid interventions
      c. Additional approaches
      d. Integrative and complementary approaches

E. Diarrhea
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
      a. Disease-related
      b. Psychological
      c. Treatment-related
   3. Assessment
      a. Bowel history
      b. Medication review
      c. Evaluate for infectious process
   4. Treatment
      a. Treat etiology as appropriate
      b. Dietary modifications (increase bulk, decreased gas-producing foods)
      c. Hydration
      d. Medications

F. Nausea/vomiting
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
      a. Physiological
      b. Psychological
      c. Disease-related
d. Treatment-related
    e. Other
3. Assessment
   a. Clinical/physical
   b. History
   c. Laboratory values
4. Treatment
   a. Pharmacologic
   b. Non-pharmacologic
   c. Invasive therapies
G. Xerostomia/Hiccup

Psychosocial Issues
H. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
   3. End-of-life care
   4. Trauma informed care
I. Depression
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
      a. Disease-related
      b. Psychological
      c. Medication-related
      d. Treatment-related
      e. Social issues
   3. Assessment
      a. Situational factors
      b. Previous psychiatric history/treatment
      c. Presence of risk factors
      d. Questions for depression assessment
      e. Suicide assessment
      f. Veterans and suicide
   4. Treatment
      a. Pharmacologic
      b. Non-pharmacologic
I. Anxiety
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
   3. Assessment
      a. Symptoms
      b. Questions for assessment
   4. Treatment
      a. Pharmacologic
      b. Non-pharmacologic
J. Delirium/agitation/confusion
   1. Definition/Overview
   2. Causes
   3. Assessment
   4. Treatment

Other Symptoms
L. Fatigue
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
M. Wounds
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
   3. Assessment
   4. Treatment
N. Seizures
   1. Definition/overview
   2. Causes
   3. Assessment
   4. Treatment
O. Sleep disturbances
P. Lymphedema
Q. Urgent syndromes

III. CONCLUSION
   A. Coordination of care with the interprofessional team
   B. Patient/family teaching and support