

# **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