

Unit 14: Choosing end life care and palliative care

Exercise 4: First steps to choose palliative care



Story – Chris chooses palliative care services Part II¹

When Chris has started to choose good palliative care services for him, he had many questions and he decided to ask Isabel about everything he needs to know. Of course, as a personal caregiver, Isabel knew most of the answers but there were several questions for which Chris and Isabel were searching for information together.

Chris was wondering **when is the right moment to start using PC?** Isabel explained to Chris that the PC is not only for the last days or weeks of life. It should start much earlier. When done earlier the palliative care treatment provides better control over the disease, reduces anxiety, and in some cases prolongs the life expectancy.

Another question was **“Where are the palliative care services can be based?”** Isabel informed Chris that there are 2 main types of palliative care services.

- PC is provided in a hospice where the rooms are well equipped and there is a team comprised of different specialists: physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists, caregivers, social workers, and a priest.
- PC provided at the home of the patient. It means that you can stay at your home and a specially trained mobile team will provide you with palliative care services.

What is the cost of PC? – usually, the costs are shared between you as a patient and the health insurance fund. For more information, you may refer to your social worker.

Last but not least, Chris has asked Isabel what are the services typically included in the PC? Isabel gave him examples for some of the services, like:

- Treatment to control your disease, pain relief, and reduce the side

effects of the medications you take.

- Physiotherapy, so that you can move easier;
- Some complementary activities, such as massage, aromatherapy to make you feel comfortable, etc.
- You may ask for psychological and spiritual support. There are people who will take care of your feelings and emotions and will help you to feel more relaxed.



¹The information provided in the story and the activity should be adjusted to the reality of the concrete story.

Activity 1:

This activity aims to challenge AAWID to go deeper into the palliative care topic.

Steps:

1. AAWID should read the continuation of the story from the previous exercise where is told about how the main character finds further information about the palliative care after he chose to use this type of services.
2. Then, to do an exercise to demonstrate how much he/she has mastered the information provided in the text.

Who are the specialists usually involved in the palliative care service team?

Palliative care should start much earlier, not in the last days or week of life, as in some cases even it can prolong the life expectancy.

Where the palliative care services can be based?

Physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists, caregivers, social workers and a priest.

When is the right moment to start using palliative care?

Most often the palliative care services can be based either in a hospice or at home.