

Social Workers Plays Vital Role in Providing Effective Palliative Care

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Palliative care is a specialized area of healthcare that focuses on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of serious illness, aiming to improve the quality of life for both patients and their families. Within this setting, social workers play a crucial role, ensuring that the care provided is holistic, addressing not only the physical but also the emotional, social, and psychological aspects of illness. Their unique training in understanding social and emotional dynamics, as well as the practical challenges faced by patients and families, makes them essential members of the palliative care team.

“As an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening / limiting illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, Physical, Psychosocial and Spiritual. These problems are addressed by health professionals from different disciplines with the patient’s interest (and that of his family) being the first priority. Living with a life limiting/threatening illness or the awareness of approaching death disrupts an individual’s thoughts and feelings, relationships, social and spiritual support and financial stability.

This is where the role of a professional social worker gains importance in palliative care as they provide the vital link between the clinical team, the society, the patient and his family. Assessment of the patient’s / caregiver’s concerns and addressing them is an ongoing process as they often change over the course of the illness. Assessment covers an overview of the patient, his family, socio economic, psychological, psycho social, spiritual, psycho sexual before deciding on the interventions required and planning for the same. These factors demand a high degree of sensitivity, compassion, empathy from the social worker towards the patient and his family and their message “We care for you” works wonders.

Liaising with Government and Non-Government agencies, making available their financial schemes and health care facilities, rehabilitation of patients and their families including providing them vocational rehabilitation, social integration and bereavement support are other areas where a Social Worker in Palliative Care is involved in. It is only

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