

Palliative Care: A Nurse Practitioner Perspective

As a palliative care nurse practitioner, I have been invited to care for exceptional individuals whose lives are altered by a serious illness. I genuinely enjoy learning about each person, the details of their life before their illness, their hopes and goals for the future, the fears they hold in their hearts, and what they value most.

My job is to be whatever each person or family needs me to be; their support on a difficult day, a champion for their goals, or a trusted resource to mitigate their fears. When I enter a patient's room, I aim to ease the emotional burden and reclaim some of the control taken away by their illness. I help alleviate symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, and fatigue. I listen to gain insight into their experience so that I can help them navigate the medical decision-making process. I revel in the triumphs and offer support in times of defeat.

Despite all my efforts to give of myself, I have been taken aback by profound words of wisdom and reassurance; from those whom I try to help, turning their support towards me. I am forever grateful to those who allow me to share their journey. Through this work, I have witnessed acts of love that still bring me to tears.

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