

---

## POSTER ABSTRACT

# Meaning Making at End of Life- An Interactive Spirituality Training Program for Palliative Care Providers

2nd Asia Pacific Conference on Integrated Care, Melbourne, 11-13 November 2019

Josephine Chow<sup>1</sup>, Kim Jobburn<sup>1</sup>, Janeane Harlum<sup>1</sup>, Jessie Williams<sup>2</sup>

1: South Western Sydney Local Health District, Liverpool, NSW, Australia;

2: The Ground Swell Project, Glenbrook, NSW, Australia

---

**Introduction:** The PEACH Program which commenced in 2013 provides home support packages for patients at end of life across four Local Health Districts (LHDs) in New South Wales. Formal evaluation via Carer Surveys (2015 -2017) identified the “Opportunity to discuss Spiritual Matters” as a priority area.

**Practice change implemented:** Feedback was presented to clinicians who identified education/training in this identified priority would be beneficial.

In 2017, as part of PEACH Program capability development an interactive spirituality workshop was created in partnership with The Ground Swell Project aiming to increase practitioner knowledge and skills.

**Aim and theory of change:** Clinicians indicate feelings of uncertainty and sometimes apprehension in speaking with the dying client and their families regarding topics of spirituality or meaning making at end of life. This is due to not wanting to cause offence or not knowing when and if the topic should be raised leaving professional care providers wondering about their role in helping those who are dying and their inner social networks to make meaning at end of life.

Aim of the workshops was for clinicians to enhance their skills in meeting the spiritual needs of patients, families and their carers.

**Targeted population and stakeholders:** Palliative care clinical/non clinical staff and volunteers across the PEACH participating LHDs, Primary Health Networks and Affiliated Health Organisations staff.

**Timeline:** Prototype development June 2017, Design and Testing, two workshops -November 2017 and workplace mini projects.

**Highlights:** An innovative clinician co-designed training where the practitioner is at ‘the heart’ of the training, providing a series of activities using peer discussion and self-reflection.

Post workshop evaluation indicated a positive rise in comfort, knowledge and confidence, average rating of 5.7/10 prior and 8.3/10 post workshop.

**Sustainability:** The training supports a strong peer learning culture enabling attendees to share insights with their teams back in the workplace enabling sustainability. A number of sites opted to include spirituality training within their inservice calendars ensuring that the lessons learnt continue to be shared.

**Transferability:** The interactive spirituality training workshop program is designed to be easily adopted within acute, community and primary care sectors. Program is designed as a train the trainer enabling capacity building within the workplace regardless of setting.

**Conclusions:** Consumer/Clinician co-designed spirituality training identified the importance of developing a clinicians' ability and confidence about their role and understanding of spirituality and its' relationship to meeting the needs of the client/carer(s) at end of life.

**Discussions:** The training program enabled clinicians to understand that spirituality is how a person makes sense of their connections. It identified that we never know what makes sense to a person until we respond to them and build on the information they give us. It's not difficult, but it can be challenging to feel confident.

**Lessons learned:** Recognition is required within the workplace that how one feels at work has a direct impact on their ability to meet the spiritual needs of dying people and their families.