HPCO Practice Opportunities

In this document, you will find the practice opportunities for the following modules:

1. **Care for the Caregiver**
2. **Cultural Considerations**
3. **Role of the Volunteer and Understanding Professional Boundaries**
4. **Communications**
5. **Spirituality**
6. **Understanding the Dying Process**

These modules are designed to assist you in completing your training, and foster deeper exploration into the themes and topics of each module. You are not required to complete these practice opportunities. You may choose to share them with the Volunteer Coordinator, Community Social Worker, or keep them private.

**Practice Opportunity Worksheet: Care for the Caregiver Module**

**The Importance of Self- Care for the Caregiver**

Being a caregiver can be both exhausting and fulfilling. For example, active listening requires intense psychological energy, but often low physical energy – a combination that can sometimes increase stress.

**What is self-­care?**

Self-care is being responsible for your own wellbeing so that you can fulfill your responsibilities. In fact, self-care is an **ethical responsibility**.

There is an old social work saying:   *“You're no good to others unless you are good to yourself.”*

Self-care is not equal to forsaking responsibility. It is not like the person who always has time to “treat” themselves to a gym workout but shirks their other responsibilities (i.e. makes excuses about shoveling their sidewalk in the winter or pulling their dandelions in the summer)You’re your focus in supporting clients seems to be more about meeting your own emotional needs, then you are likely pursuing your own “agenda” rather than being responsive to your clients’ needs.

**The principles of self­care** (​Adapted from Philip Aziz Centre for Hospice Care)

* Care for yourself before you care for others
* Acknowledge and deal with your feelings so that they don’t get in the way of your  caregiving
* To be an effective caregiver you need to establish and maintain healthy boundaries
* Acknowledge and accept your limitations.

**Signs of poor self-care**

Watch for signs that you may be under too much negative stress or that your life is becoming out of balance.

* These signs can be very subtle and are often easy to miss. For example, some people develop a head cold when they go on vacation because their adrenaline stopped; their body communicated how it was really feeling and what it really needed: Rest.
* The signs can sneak up on you in the form of cravings or longings. For example, you may start craving time alone, which may lead to resenting ay demands on your time or energy like phone calls from family, friends or telemarketers.

*Physical Signs of Poor Self-Care*

* Exhaustion
* Low energy ­ feeling drained or that you have nothing to give
* Physical complaints or illnesses
* Too much or too little sleep.

*Relational Signs of Poor Self­-Care*

* Detachment from people; feeling distant
* Cynicism, resentment, feeling "used"

*Mental Signs of Poor Self­-care*

* Obsessing, worrying
* Weird dreams
* Becoming forgetful
* Poor concentration.

*Emotional Signs of Poor Self-care*

* Denial of emotions, lack of self-awareness ­someone tells you that you are crabby or asks you, "What got under your skin?"
* Impatience, irritability
* Negativity
* Sense of dissatisfaction.

*Functional Signs of Poor Self-care*

* Being ineffective, being busy but not accomplishing much
* Feeling disorderly and disorganized
* Procrastinating
* Being late
* Using bad habits, such as excessive alcohol or caffeine, as a crutch.

All these signs may cause stress to grow. Take a moment to reflect on the **signs of poor self-care** and make a list of your personal signs of stress. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_It’s important to be aware of your personal signs of poor self-care and stress, and to use them as an early warning signal.

**Seven Steps to Good Self-Care**

1. Care for your physical health
2. Care for your social health
3. Care for your emotional and spiritual health
4. Acknowledge and set limits
5. Identify and utilize available supports
6. Take a break
7. Learn to say goodbye.

Tips to improve self-care

* **H.A.L.T -** ​­ Never let yourself become too…
  + **h​**ungry
  + **a​**ngry
  + **l​**onely or
  + **t**ired!

*This tip, adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous, recognizes that when you become hungry, angry, lonely or tired you are more vulnerable to destructive habits. (You may be lonely for yourself.)*

* Physically H.E.R.E - **h**ealthy **e**ating, **r**est and **e**xercise. Your body is the vehicle through which you care for others so remember to take care of it.
  + H​ealthy ​E​ating
    - Eat veggies and fruit. They are good for the immune system and can reduce the risk of cancer.
    - Drink water instead of coffee, tea, pop and juice.
  + R​est
    - Sleep 8 to 10 hours daily to avoid the effects of sleep deprivation, which include reduced safety; lack of attention and decreased ability to learn.
    - Remember: rest is more than just sleep. It includes building in breaks from work and worry into your life. Consider setting aside some “rest” times each day, week, month and year when you will intentionally slow down. For example, keep one day each week for rest, spiritual worship and play with no shopping, heavy duty cooking or other chores.
  + E​xercise
    - Build regular light physical exercise, such as walking, into your day. Exercise builds bone strength and helps the body produce more red blood cells, which keep us healthy. Get lots of fresh air. We tend to get more colds in the winter because we spend more time indoors where we are exposed to more germs.

**Take a moment to reflect on the times when you are too busy, too stressed or too drained. Think about which self­-care practices you abandon first​(assuming that you already have some of them in place!)?**

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**What is the effect on you?**

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**Think about your social­ solitude balance. Which tires you more: lots of solitude or lots of social interaction? Which revitalizes you more? Do you tend to process internally (i.e. seek solitude) or externally (i.e. seek social interaction) when you are going through a difficult time?**

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**Mark your usual “style” on the scale below.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Solitude | Social |

**Take a moment to think about the following: Is your life in balance for you at this time? Who drains you and why? How can you limit your time with those individuals or the effect they have on you? Who makes you feel replenished and why? How can you spend more time with these people without draining them?**

**Advantages of solitude**

* A time for reflection
* The opportunity to operate at your own pace. You don’t have to go faster or slower for someone else
* No interruptions
* Solitude is NOT the same as loneliness or being alone. You can walk, hike or read silently in someone else's presence and find solitude there.

**At this time in your life, do you have the right balance between the time you spend with replenishing people and the time you spend in replenishing solitude?**

**Self-­Care Exercise**

**Habits, Hobbies and "Humans"**

Good self-care is a protective buffer or shield. What have you got going for you?

1. Review the examples in the chart below (5 minutes)
2. Go through the worksheet. Write down the elements of good self-care you have in place already and anything you want to improve on (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Share and celebrate your “self care shield” with someone close to you (5 minutes)
4. Save your worksheet and submit it via email to your training coordinator.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Habits​** that help me function well, reduce pressure and keep my life in balance | | |
| Habits I already possess | How do they help? | Ideas for improvement |
| Balanced eating | I feel good and energetic |  |
| Putting out my clothes for the next day | I'm not making decisions in the morning when I'm rushed |  |
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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Hobbies** ​that replenish me, help “clear the cobwebs” and refresh my mind, body and spirit | | |
| Hobbies I actively pursue | How do they help? Do I enjoy them often enough? | Ideas for improvement; New hobbies to pursue |
| Gardening ­ growing veggies | Working with my hands, visual, the wonder of life, fresh organic food! |  |
| Hiking & snowshoeing ­ Saturday 6 AM trips | Exercise, fresh air, visual, landscapes |  |
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| **Humans**​­ people in my life ­who believe in me, stick by me & understand my goals & burdens | | |
| People in my life that I'm thankful for because they strengthen and replenish me | How do they help? | Ideas for improvement |
| 4 Best friends | Play! Ideas/mind expansion, companionship |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Social – Solitude Balance** | | |
| Forms of solitude that replenish me | Is my social­-solitude balance right for me at this time? Do I need some time for solitude or the strength to go it alone on some things? |  |
| Balance Reading, journaling, praying, thinking in the car or with a coffee music |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Adapted from document from Philip Aziz Centre for Hospice Care

**Practice Opportunity Worksheet: Cultural Considerations**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Behaviour** | **What it means to me** | **What it might mean to another** | **Potential Misunderstandings** |
| Not making eye contact |  |  |  |
| Saying “yes” |  |  |  |
| Spending time on small talk |  |  |  |
| Arriving late for an appointment/class/work |  |  |  |
| Needing to consult family |  |  |  |

Think about what the following behaviours mean to you. Then consider what it might mean to a person from a cultural background that is different from your own. How could these differences result in misunderstandings?

**Practice Opportunity Worksheet: Role of the Volunteer and Understanding Professional Boundaries**  
Scenario: *The ‘Boundary Less’ Volunteer*

**Volunteer: Ivan Client: Esmerala**

**\*Takes place in the client’s home - Esmerala is in her room, lying in bed\***

Ivan walks into the bedroom with a key around his neck.

**Ivan:** Hey Esmerala, how are you doing today? Thanks so much for giving me the key to your place. It makes it so much easier for me to come and go when I need to. See I have it around my neck so I won’t lose it?

**Esmerala:** What a great idea.

**Ivan:** Did you take your pills yet, Esmerala?

**Esmerala:** No not yet.

**Ivan:** Let me go get them for you.   
(Ivan leaves the room and comes back with the pill bottle).   
How many of these do you have to take? The bottle says 2 every 4 hours.

**Esmerala:** I am not sure how many I usually take. What do you think?

**Ivan:** (opens pill bottle and hands Esmerala 3 pills)   
Here you go. I think you need 3 now as you seem to be in a bit more pain today.

**Esmerala:** (takes pills)   
Thanks Ivan and thanks for coming early today. I really appreciate you coming for the day. I get so lonely.

**Ivan:** No problem, Esmerala. I can come tomorrow for a few hours as well. Work has been slow so I have a lot more time and love to spend it with you.

**Ivan:** (goes over and sits on Esmerala’s bed and puts his arm around her - she looks uncomfortable)   
Esmerala, do you want to talk about your will? I am so flattered that you want to make me the executor of your will. I will make sure that things get done properly. You can trust me. Do you have the paper work for me to sign?

**Esmerala:** It is down stairs in my desk, the one in my office by the front door.

**Ivan:** We can go over the paper work tomorrow. You are looking so tired I think I will go downstairs and let you rest until dinner time. I will make dinner for us both, what would you like? Why don’t I make chicken and rice?   
(Ivan gets off the bed and starts to walk towards the door.)

**Esmerala:** Ivan, you are too good to me. You are nicer than my own family. I so appreciate it. To show my appreciation, I want you to have these two gold rings. They are family heirlooms.   
(Esmerala takes the 2 gold rings off her fingers and hands them to Ivan.)   
I know you can’t wear them but you can give them to your wife or you can sell them. They are worth a good sum of money and I would rather it go to you than my daughter who can’t even bother to come and visit me.

**Ivan:** (takes the rings)   
Thanks so much, Esmerala. This means so much to me. I will surprise my wife with them. Hey, better yet why don’t I have her come here and you can see her reaction yourself. What do you say I have her come on Sunday afternoon? That’s her day off. Give me a call on Sunday and let me know if you’re feeling up to it. It would be a great chance for the two of you to finally meet.

**Esmerala:** That sounds great.

**Ivan:** I will let you rest now while I make dinner.   
(Ivan leaves the room.)

**Esmerala:** (says to herself)   
What a wonderful man; he is like my son. I wish he were my son. What would I ever do without him?

**\*End Scene\***

**Answer the following questions based on *The ‘Boundary-Less’ Volunteer:***

1. Outline all of the boundaries that you noticed being crossed in this scenario.

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2. Which boundaries could have legal implications for hospice?

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3. What type of relationship has the crossing of boundaries created between Ivan and Esmerala?

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4. Reflecting on yourself, what boundary(ies) do you think you may have difficulty maintaining and why?

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5. Go back and review the videos on the different ways to say “no”. Which way feels most comfortable to you and why? Practice saying “no” with someone you know and write down your insights on how it felt.

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**Practice Opportunity Worksheet: Communications Module**  
The video in reference is available in the Communications Skills Module (topic 4: Effective Communication). Here is a practice opportunity capturing some of the things you have learned.

Ask a friend, colleague, or family member to tell you about a very distressing situation that they have experienced, they can make it up as long as it is realistic. You must listen to their story and resist the urge or make any comments, or to speak, while the person is telling you about their experience. You may only nod or say “uhumm”. When their story is finished, both you and the speaker are to reflect and answer the following questions.

**SPEAKER**  
Did you feel listened to?  
What do you think allowed you to be heard?  
What were you aware of while you were speaking?  
What was the listeners’ body language saying to you?

**LISTENER**  
How difficult was it to center yourself so you could listen closely?  
Did the environment influence your ability to listen? If so how did you deal with it?  
What were the things that intruded on your thoughts?  
Did you notice your body language? What was it saying?  
How often were you tempted to jump in with solutions or ideas?  
Did you feel compelled to tell the speaker about a similar personal experience?

**Practice Opportunity Worksheet: Spirituality Module**

**Think about what brings meaning, purpose and strength to your life.**

1. What kind of spiritual or religious practices do you have?

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1. How do you connect with a sense of the sacred?

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1. Do you consider yourself spiritual or religious, or both?

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1. In what ways do you express this in your personal life?

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1. What could you draw strength from to support your work as a volunteer caregiver?

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**Practice Opportunity Worksheet: Understanding the Dying Process Module**

1. Have you had a “dreams or visions” experience with a loved one or have you heard of this from others? What are your thoughts and feelings about dreams or visions someone may have near end of life?

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