

Interprofessional Palliative Simulation Sessions to Improve Communication at the End of Life



Nottingham
University Hospitals
NHS Trust

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Background National audit of care at the end of life highlights poor communication (NACEL 2025). Simulation-based education has been proven to improve communication skills for health care professionals for many years (Farina 2024) A local, bespoke palliative care simulation course has been running for two years. Interprofessional working and education is particularly advocated in palliative care (Wahab et al 2016) due to the holistic nature of the specialty. The use of hospital-based interprofessional simulation for palliative care conversations is currently under-researched (Kirkpatrick, Donesky, Kitko 2023).

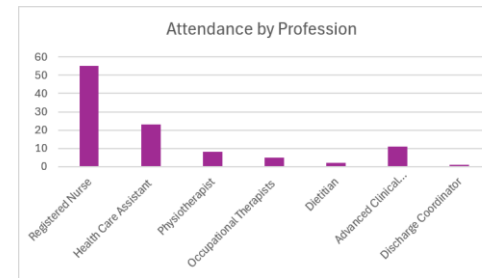
Aim To provide interprofessional palliative simulation sessions, accessible to all qualified nursing and allied health professionals, from all adult inpatient areas across Nottingham University Hospitals.

Methodology

- 6 candidates per half-day session
- 5 scenarios forming a longitudinal simulation, including uncertainty of prognosis, end of life care, nutrition & hydration, dealing with distress and care after death.
- Scenarios can be interchanged for different roles.
- Facilitated by a Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Specialist and a Practice Educator in Simulation Education
- Feedback collected via pre and post-session QR codes

Results

105 attendees since January 2026



“Very relevant and appropriate for the target audience. The different skill mix of the candidates worked well and was inclusive to all” (Nurse)

“Very useful afternoon. It was set at the right level for everyone in the room. I feel like I would now be able to better support a patient at the end of their life and understand my role” (Physio)

“The simulations were relevant and useful in learning how to answer real-life questions without preparation” (HCA)

Conclusion Interprofessional simulation focusing on difficult conversations at the end of life is thought-provoking and highly-evaluated. An additional course, focusing on timely recognition of dying by the interprofessional team, is now being developed.



Challenges

Of 165 people booked onto the course, 60 did not attend due to Trust financial and staffing pressures.

Farina C, Moreno J, Schneiderieth T (2024) 'Using simulation to improve communication skills', *The Nursing Clinics of North America*, 59(3): 437-448. Kirkpatrick, Donesky, Kitko (2023) 'A Systematic Review of Interprofessional Palliative Care Education Programs', *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, 65 (5): e439-e466. National Audit of Care at the End of Life (NACEL) (2025) <https://www.nacel.nhs.uk> Wahab M et al (2016) 'Creating Effective Interprofessional Mentoring Relationships in Palliative Care – Lessons from Medicine, Nursing, Surgery and Social Work', *Journal of Palliative Care & Medicine*, 6 (6), 290.

