



# Palliative Care and Social Services in the Safety Net

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Will Kennedy

CareOregon/Housecall Providers

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine

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*“All of us here in this Yard, at one time or another, have seen human tragedies that broke our hearts, and yet we did nothing – not because we didn’t care, but because we didn’t know what to do. If we had known how to help, we would have acted.*

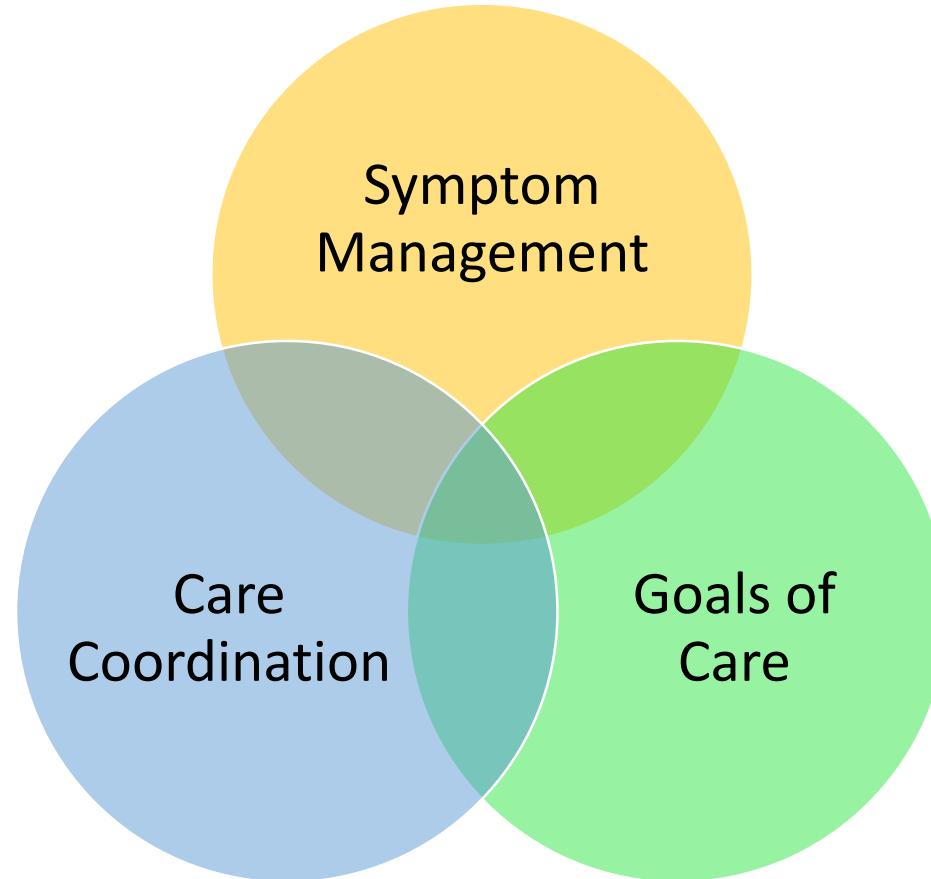
***The barrier to change is not too little caring; it is too much complexity.”***

*-Bill Gates*

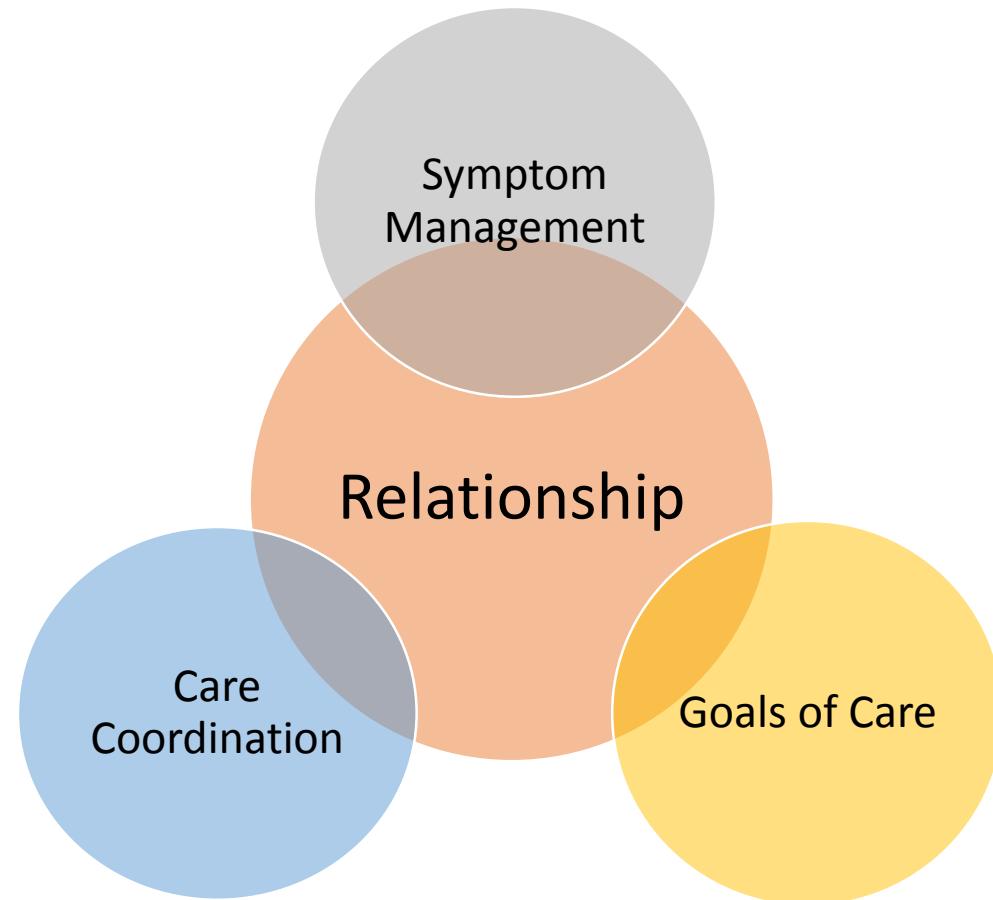
# Paul's Story

- 50 years old, diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer
- History of leaving the hospital abruptly “against medical advice”
- Job loss, addiction, divorce, estrangement from his children...life became a “downward spiral”
- Physically frail and lived an isolated life in a single room hotel
- Agreed to aggressive therapy without understanding outcomes
- Had heart attack, lost housing due to missing rent
- Surprised and angry when told “...nothing else could be done.”
- Eventually accepted diagnosis but refused hospice as “giving up”

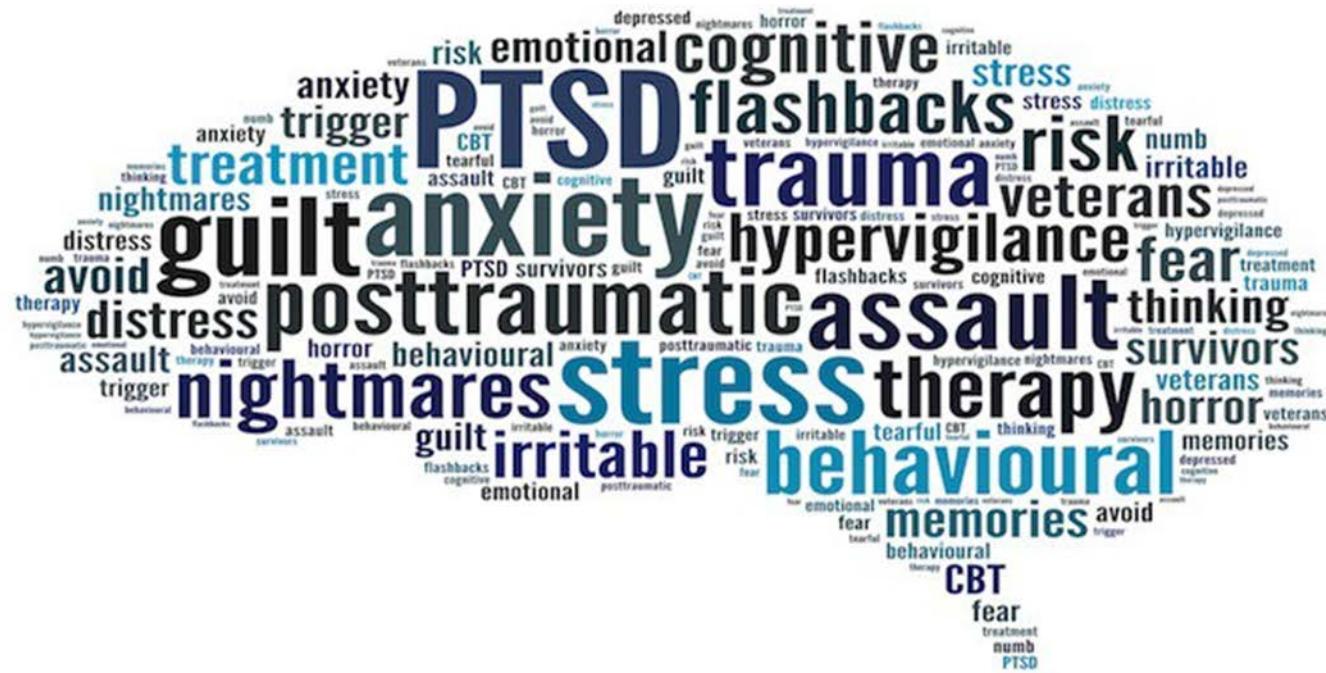
# Traditional Palliative Care



# Safety Net Palliative Care



# Traumatic Life Experience

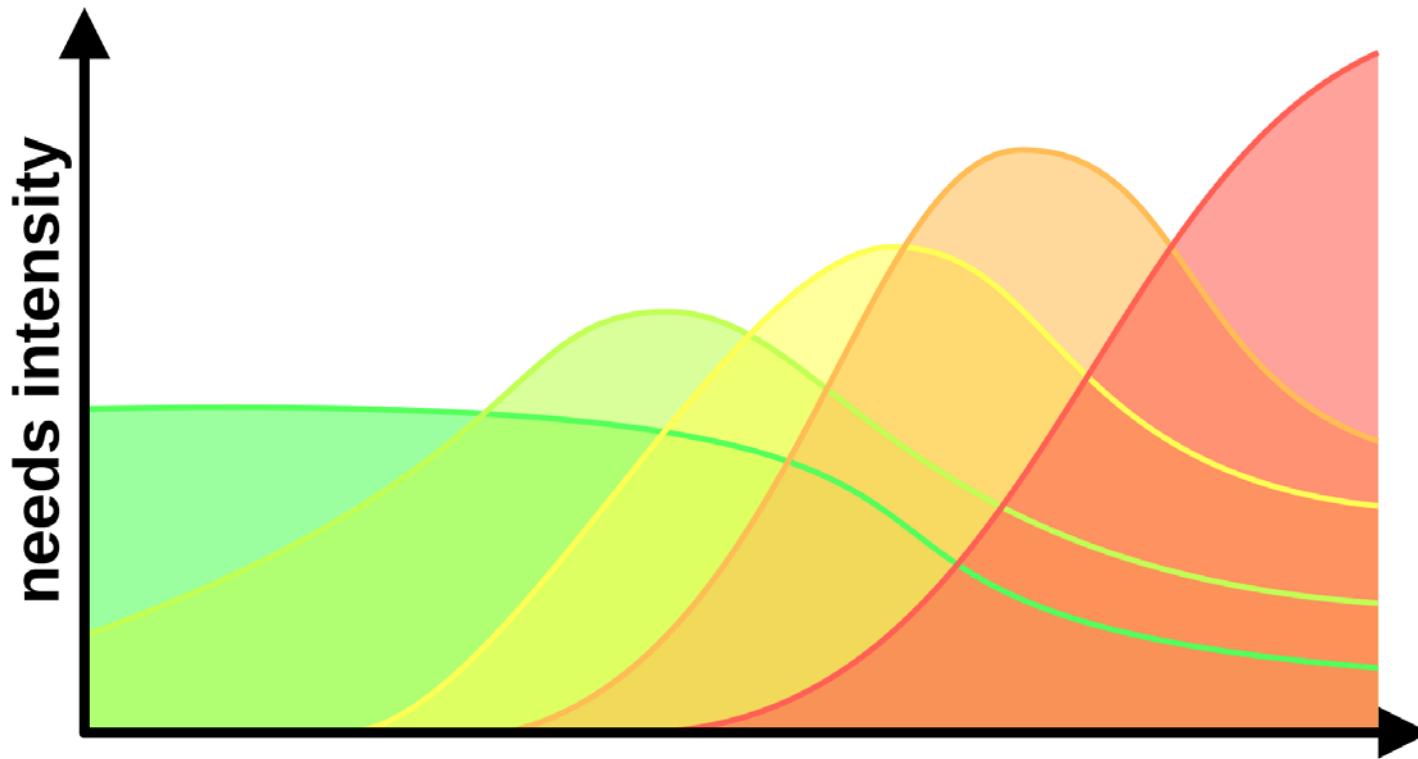




Relationships are the agents of change  
and the most powerful therapy  
is human love.



— BRUCE D. PERRY, MD



Mental Health  
Addiction  
Lack of Social Supports  
Food Insecurity  
Housing  
Health Literacy

hidden barriers

- No insurance
- Complicated Eligibility Requirements
- Discrimination
- Cultural Incompetence
- Disorganized Services
- Inaccessible Service Locations
- Provider Attitudes
- Distrust of System
- Prior Bad Experiences
- Disabilities
- No documents/No Transportation
- Language/Illiteracy
- Disorganized Lifestyle
- Complex Health Problems

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## Applying Motivational Interviewing Techniques to Palliative Care Communication

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# Unpacking Paul

- Lived with terminal cancer, refused hospice, isolated, and walked out of the hospital several times for unclear reasons.
- Required building trust through a dedicated palliative care team, with the understanding that they would be with him until death.
- Eventually, he disclosed abuse from his uncle as a child.
- Before he died in supportive housing, he remarked about his care, “I used to be falling and now I am not.”
- Paul experienced a peaceful death.