Embracing Life, Facing Death: Hindu Perspective

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The Journey and the Inspiration

- Preparing myself
- Initiating the conversation
- Communication
- Decision Making
- Integrating palliative care
- Rituals
- End of Life care
- Self reflection
Preparing myself..

Palliative Care is about Transitions..

Every patient is at the crossroads

Every family along with the patient is in turmoil

My role is to help

find this balance
My Energy
Lord Shiva’s Tandavam
Exemplary poise in the Flux of Life

Pulsating Energy
With
Perfect Balance
The Nataraja Posture in
the Divine Dance of Lord Shiva
Initiating the conversation

Palliative Care: Providing comfort in the present without guilt from the past and worry about the future

Bhagawad Geeta: Do not weep for the past; Do not worry for the future; Concentrate on your present

Bhagawad Geeta: The Divine Song
Finding the Inspiration for Effective Communication

The epitome of the most powerful communication:

The Bhagawad Geeta

Is the dialogue between the warrior and his divine charioteer who listens, empathises and guides him in his most difficult time....

In Palliative Care:

It is the Ask- Tell – Ask approach

Listening, empathising, acknowledging the emotion and counselling the patient is effective communication
Taking Ethical Decisions

**Collective Autonomy**

- **Family**: Should we even tell the patient?....Collective Autonomy
- **Patient**: What if I get addicted to these medicines? Maybe I should bear the pain..
- **Friends**: Maybe surgery is a better option....

**The Physician**

- **Autonomy**: Does the patient even know? Is this an informed decision?
- **Beneficence**: Am I doing right?
- **Non maleficence**: I should not be doing harm
- **Justice**: Is this justified?
Dealing with the Dilemma

The Intention behind the Action is Paramount

and the concern of a true worker
or Karma Yogi is with the Action
alone not the fruit of the action

The Bhagawad Geeta

and in Palliative Care our intention is to provide comfort.

We do our best to relieve suffering till the very end like the Karma Yogi should;

without turning away or Inaction
Inaction?

The true Karma Yogi does not quote inaction says the Bhagavad Geeta

Translate the thought into action.

Let The Anger In Compassion
Be The Catalyst For Change

Dr Robert Twycross - about the urgent need for integrating and improving palliative care services.
Improving and integrating palliative care services

• Building Bridges and integrating harmoniously with the fraternity and the society.

• Creating a strong multidisciplinary TEAM for patient care

This needs

• Wisdom

• Alertness

• Perseverance

• Faith and Belief
Rituals

Rituals inculcate discipline and provide comfort.

The power of a chant,
lighting the lamp
designs on the floor
with flowers and more..
Philosophy of Hospice Care

Hospice is like a temple
Here Peace and Turmoil Coexist

In addition to the physical, psychosocial and emotional... the priority is also to address unfulfilled wishes

Planted in a patient’s memory at our hospice...
Prioritising Unfulfilled desires

Prioritising unfinished business and fulfilling wishes is an important part of palliative care practice.

Hindus believe that the freedom transcending birth and death is the ultimate goal - Moksha

“When life ends and desire remains, it is death and When Desire ends and Life remains,” it is Moksha

Standing without attachment like the lotus - To achieve Moksha...
Attaining Moksha

Reading scriptures like the Srimad Bhagavatham
which removes the fear of dying

Visiting the holy city of Benares
where death is welcomed and
considered a sure way to Moksha
The next best is to be cremated here.
Reaching Acceptance

Some answers to Why Me?

The Evolution of the Soul

“Just as a man casts off worn out clothes and puts on others which are new, so the embodied (self) casts off worn out bodies and enters others which are new”
The Bhagwat Gita Chapter 2 Verse 22

KARMA

What goes around comes around back
Caring for the Bereaved

Bereavement care
An important component of palliative care to support the family and identify complicated grief.

Rituals and ceremonies in Hinduism carry on till a year

Community absorbs this responsibility significantly.
Self Awareness
Introspection

A long way to go from Turbulence to Equipoise

Am just a Common Coot ...trying hard!
Thank you

• Parents, Teachers and The Almighty in true Hindu tradition: Mata, Pita, Guru, Daivam

• Family, friends and the fraternity – a special mention to my friends whose photographs, rangolis and pictures have been used in this presentation.

• My institute and the hospice

• My patients and caregivers from whom I have received more than I have given

Drawn by our young patient who has attained Moksha