

Assessing and Addressing Suffering

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The following discussion questions are provided as an additional educational tool to accompany this fireside chat video. Please feel free to select the questions that are most relevant to your committee or group, revise and adapt them as needed, etc. As always, we welcome feedback on this or any other NSHEN resource.

Questions:

1. Katie distinguishes suffering from pain, describing pain as a physical reality and suffering as having existential quality. Discuss this distinction.
2. Discuss why pain may be easier to assess and address than suffering.
3. Katie associate suffering with a loss of relationships - for example, the loss of relationship that patients are experiencing around end-of-life. Do you think this summarizes what suffering is about?
4. Can you think of case examples from your work where you have seen patients suffer? Discuss how you would identify suffering from pain in these cases.
5. Are there common features for how suffering manifests in these cases/situations?
6. Katie suggests that health care spending associated with end-of-life care may be reduced if health care providers were better at communicating with patients about death. Do you agree?
7. Discuss the role of rituals as tools for addressing suffering in the health care setting.
8. Discuss the statement that “making meaning out of suffering is a way to build resilience”.

Resources

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