



**We are
Called**

TO HEAL. TO UNITE. TO JUSTICE.

Team Reflections – Huddle

No. 12 Cultural Differences and End-of-Life Preference

Honoring cultural and religious norms is essential, especially to build trust between clinical professionals, patients and families. There are unintended outcomes of honoring cultural or religious norms. The disparity in the usage of pain medication and hospice is one example. Non-white populations have higher rates of inadequately treated pain, preference-discordant medical treatments and low satisfaction with provider communication when compared to whites [12.1]

We know that much can be lost in translation. Words like *hospice*, *palliative care* and *caregiver* may be translated correctly, but what these terms mean and what they signal in the patient and family's minds may be quite different. Having professional interpreters as members of interdisciplinary care teams is critically important.

The Catholic tradition views the family as central to the care of the terminally ill patient. "Next to the family, hospice centers which welcome the terminally sick and ensure their care until the last moment of life, provide an important and valuable service. After all, the Christian response to the mystery of death and suffering is to provide not an explanation but a presence that shoulders the pain, accompanies it, and opens it to a trusting hope." [12.2]

Consider

How do cultural humility and learning skills get passed on to staff on in-patient units and physician clinics, assisted living and other continuum of care settings?

Let us pray together,

Eternal and Loving God,

Bless your servants to whom you have given a long life.

Let them know and sense your nearness,

*so that when they worry about the past, they will rejoice in your mercy
and when they think about their future, they will rely on you as their hope.*

AMEN.

(Adapted from the *Book of Blessings*)

[12.1] N Engl J Med 2015; 373:747-755

DOI: 10.1056/NEJMra1404684

[12.2] Samaritanus bonus: On the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life. Aug. 22, 2020.