

Tracing the Memories of Persons Facing Advanced Cancer through a Life Review Intervention

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Background: Facing a life-threatening illness places the individual at the heart of existential questions. We developed an intervention, called Revie⊕, which target existential needs and was specifically designed for people with advanced cancer. The intervention promotes person's growth and dignity, which are tenets of a palliative care approach. The intervention driven by specialized nurses included a life-review while integrating a positive approach. As a conclusion to the intervention, a booklet describing the patients' life was created, integrating photos, citations or pictures. This booklet was subsequently given to the participants. **Aim:** The purpose of this exhibition is to present a selection of passages from the booklets that illustrate the experience lived by patients facing life-threatening illness. The selections trace some significant live events, their current projects and important messages left for loved ones. **Method:** A qualitative content analysis methodology was used to investigate booklets created in collaboration with 41 patients facing advanced cancer. The study took place in an ambulatory and inpatient setting of a Swiss university hospital.

Results: The main categories identified by two researchers after coding the content of the booklets were: focus on childhood, professional activities, important roles, impact of illness, values, resources, words left and life project. The majority of the booklets included pictures, poems, quotes chosen by the participants illustrating their experiences and emotions. The messages left to close relatives or to caregivers were words of love and notes of thanks.

Conclusion: Booklets describing patients' life, integrating photos, citations or pictures helped to recognize the patient in his single existence. Through the narrative of positive events and the whole of life, cancer may no longer constitutes the most significant element in life. Revie ⊕ helped patients seek their own potential, to work towards meeting one's self and to leave a legacy for close relatives. The intervention also addressed the concerns around death and ultimately helped clarify life plans.