Palliative Care: A Behavioral Resource for Healthcare Professionals Promoting Humanity and Dignity in End-of-Life Patients - A Pilot Study

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Palliative Care (PC) involves active support for patients with life-limiting illnesses, focusing on symptom control and quality of life. This study aimed to characterize intermediate behaviors within the class "to care palliatively," as performed by healthcare professionals, emphasizing humanity and dignity in PC. The method comprised seven stages and was based on a behavioral teaching technology—the Programming of Conditions for the Development of Behavior: (1) literature selection; (2) identification of specific behavioral components; (3) behavior componentes language evaluation by psychologists specialized in Behavior Analysis; (4) behavior classes organization based on professional roles and PC situations; (5) calculation of the Content Validity Index (CVI) for each class; (6) design of the manual layout; and (7) a pilot application with 5 participants. The pilot application aimed to assess the manual's impact on professional training and its contribution to the healthcare professional performance in enabling humanity and dignity towards terminal patients. As results, six scientific materials sources were selected, and the Triple Contingency method enabled the identification of 43 classes of antecedent stimuli, 81 of responses, 52 of consequent stimuli, and 88 intermediate behaviors. These behavior classes encompassed various stages of PC, including medical care and bereavement, underscoring the subjective dimensions of the dying process. The manual produced allowed structuring actions in PC and proved to be a valuable educational tool. Pre- and post-test comparisons, supported by Wilcoxon test results (a nonparametric statistics), confirmed the manual’s effectiveness, validating the pilot application and suggesting its potential for broader application.

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