



# Northern Health Palliative Care

**HOT TIPS**  
Sept 2017

## Principles of Palliation for Personal Support Workers

### Main Principles of Palliation

- Focus on the person's goals
- Inform and educate the person and family
- Prevent symptoms that can be prevented
- Individualize comfort measures and use non-pharmacological measures when possible
- Use medications when necessary for symptom management
- Monitor, record and report initially then follow up to responses of medications and other comfort measures

### PSW's Role in Palliation

- To report any changes or new symptoms to the health care team who will then determine a plan of care

### Principles for Using Medications

- The person determines the goal for pain relief
- Opioids are used commonly in moderate to severe pain and shortness of breath
- Provide opioids regularly, around the clock
- Provide breakthrough doses as needed
- Use the simplest route possible (oral)
- Give a combination of medications if required
- Treat side effects
- Provide non-medication comfort measures
- Observe, record and report response to medication and other comfort measures provided
- Side effects, fears or concerns about medications should also be recorded, reported and addressed by the health care team

#### References:

Murray, K. (2014) *Integrating a Palliative Approach: Essentials for Personal Support Workers*. N.p.: Life and Death Matters.