

# Massachusetts General Hospital BMT Survivorship Program

## Improving Quality of Life: Palliative Care

Palliative care is special medical care across many areas (multidisciplinary care) for people with serious illnesses. It is focused on improving quality of life for both the patient and family—providing relief from the symptoms, pain, and stresses of a serious illness.

Palliative care clinicians:

- use many treatments to improve quality of life at any stage of a serious illness, including during curative treatment (such as bone marrow transplant).
- work closely with patients' oncologists, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, pharmacists to help meet the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of patients and their families.
- offer personalized, family-centered support with treatments that are unique to each patient and incorporate their goals, hopes, moral values, and cultural practices.

Treatment may involve medications and other therapies for pain, emotional distress and other troubling symptoms, such as nausea, shortness of breath, fatigue, and loss of appetite. Examples include:

- Patient-controlled medicine pumps
- Relaxation techniques, such as meditation or guided imagery
- Short-term cognitive-behavioral therapy, like pain-coping skills
- One-on-one and family counseling, including special services for younger children
- Weekly clinics centering on specific conditions, such chronic graft-versus-host disease related pain

### Mass General Resources

Palliative Care

Call 617-724-4000 and ask to speak with the palliative care scheduler to schedule an appointment.

[www.massgeneral.org/palliativecare](http://www.massgeneral.org/palliativecare)