

Table 2-3: Core Elements of Palliative Care

- Emphasizes comprehensive care of the whole patient, inclusive of medical, psychosocial, and spiritual concerns.
- Depends on effective communication and relationship building, within a model of diverse expertise and interdisciplinary teamwork, not an authoritative hierarchy.
- Goals of care include relief of suffering, control of symptoms, and restoration of functional capacity.
- Supports neither goal of cure nor the hastening or prolonging of death.
- Considers patients' subjective experience (e.g., pain, other symptoms) to be as important as objective clinical data.
- Diagnosis not predetermined goal: only pursued if conforms to patient-determined goals of care.
- Death not equated with defeat but rather is seen as natural conclusion of life; response of the clinician should be to comfort, not withdraw.
- Management plan tailored specifically to each patient, according to patient's values and preferences, not decided unilaterally by physician.