



Pennwood Village

Quality Care with European Flair

10 Questions – Palliative Care

Palliative care provides the best quality of life when someone has an illness that's likely to cause death within the foreseeable future. This may vary from a few days to years. For many residents, the staff in the aged care facility will be able to provide the care needed. Others will need specialist palliative care involvement. The following questions will help you find out whether the facility can manage your changing needs in the final stage of your life.

1. Are you able to provide a palliative approach to care in the facility?

A palliative approach aims to maximise your quality of life in the facility. It focuses on your comfort and wishes, taking into account your health condition. It may mean that some possible treatments that do not enhance or support your quality of life are declined.

Pennwood Village has developed important relationships with external palliative care providers such as Central Palliative Care Services and the Palliative Care Council of South Australia. Advanced Care Planning has become an instrumental component of the residential admission process, in ensuring appropriate palliation in accordance with residents and their next of kins wishes.

2. Do I need an advance care plan?

It's not compulsory but a written advance care plan can tell the staff about your wishes, values and any treatments you do or do not want. This is particularly useful in an emergency or should you be unable to communicate them yourself as your needs change. Ideally this would be decided with you on admission.

As mentioned above, advanced care planning and consultation occurs as part of the admission process. Families and residents are very proactive in this process with guidance from the Site Manager and Clinical Nurse.

The ACD ensures that Palliation occurs holistically and the transition to Palliation is a smooth and as stress free as possible.

3. What palliative care training do staff receive?

Knowledge and experience may vary depending on whether a staff member is a Carer or an experienced Registered Nurse and the length of time they have worked in the field. Ideally all staff should be trained in palliative care when they are first employed and then given regular updates.

Staff receive extensive training, particularly in relation to the administration of palliative care medications and utilising the Nikki Syringe Driver. The clinical

management team have expertise in palliative care and are always available to support and guide staff when palliation is required.

Pennwood is able to provide denominational/non-denominational pastoral support for residents and their families.

4. How will staff recognise when I'm close to dying and what processes are in place for this?

Your health may deteriorate suddenly or so gradually that it can be hard for staff to recognise. Ask if the staff have the skills to notice changes and respond appropriately. Check what arrangements are in place to respond to changes as they are noticed.

Pennwoods clinical team closely monitor residents health status and utilise a variety of allied health professionals to ensure accurate diagnosis, appropriate nursing care and health management.

Our residential turn over is below the national average, ensuring prolonged client and facility relationships.

Pennwood is able to provide denominational/non-denominational pastoral support for residents and their families.

5. What support will there be for my loved ones when I'm close to dying?

Ask how your loved ones will be told about your changing condition and whether they can stay overnight if you need them. Check if there are restrictions on visiting times.

Pennwood prides itself on the relationships that we develop with both residents and their families. Management are proactive in direct consultation and support throughout the palliative care process. Meals are provided to families and visitors during palliative care and our open door policy ensures a positive outcome for both the care recipient and families throughout the palliative process.

Pennwood is able to provide denominational/non-denominational pastoral support for residents and their families.

6. What arrangements are in place for my spiritual and cultural needs?

Ask how you'll get support for your spiritual, religious, psychological, social and family needs. If you need a pastoral care worker or other outside support people to visit, ask how this will be arranged. If you are from a particular cultural group make sure there are arrangements for your cultural needs to be met.

When advanced care planning occurs during the admission process, spiritual preferences are obtained and documented in the nursing care plan to ensure staff are aware of the spiritual advisors contact details. Pennwood has developed a rapport with a number of spiritual and religious networks particularly within the CALD communities.

7. Will I be able to have specialist palliative care if I need it?

Palliative care specialists can help if your problems become more complex, and they can also support your family. They carefully check everything that is affecting you but do not take over day to day care. They provide expert advice and guidance to your GP and the staff so they can continue caring for you. Ask whether the staff will be able to tell when you need a palliative care specialist, and how a visit will be arranged.

Palliative Care Specialists regularly contribute and visit residents at Pennwood Village when complex issues arise during palliation.

Such is the strong relationship that develops between Pennwood and the resident and families that they rely on the Pennwood Clinical Team for ongoing guidance and support when specialist care is required.

8. Will I get the medicines I need if things change suddenly, and how long will it take?

If your health changes suddenly your medication may need to be adjusted. Ask how quickly this can happen, especially out of hours and on weekends. Not all aged care facilities have medical and nursing staff on site at all times.

Qualified nursing staff are onsite 24/7, including Registered Nurses and Enrolled Nurses so that these medications can be administered in an expedient manner. Pennwood has a licence for imprest palliative care medications so that we have these medications available on demand at all times. Our Pharmacy is also available seven days a week and in the event that emergency supplies are required. Pennwood Nursing staff work closely with general practitioners so that palliative medication orders are obtained in a timely manner.

9. How many staff are present on evening and night duty?

Ask how many carers are working each shift and how many residents they look after. Also ask if there is a registered nurse on duty at all times to provide clinical assessment and 'as required' medications.

Staff ratios exceed the national standard. Pennwood management increase staff as required, in the event of exceptional circumstances. A Registered Nurse covers all shifts.

10. If I need equipment to help with my comfort or problems, will the facility provide it?

Ask how equipment, such as a pressure relieving mattress or a device for medication, will be arranged if needed. Not all specialist equipment may be included in your basic fees, so check what additional costs will be payable by you.

Pennwood has a 'palliative care kit' available with equipment required for palliative care i.e. nikki syringe driver etc. Pressure relieving mattresses are available and are provided by the facility when required. Pennwood recognises that during palliation, individual needs vary and will provide all provisions based on these individual needs.