How Can Palliative Care Be Helpful to You?

Some patient examples . . .

“I have cancer and am receiving chemotherapy. My pain is being treated, but it is still interfering with my ability to live my life fully.”

Palliative care can help with pain and symptom management while you are receiving active treatment. Our consultation team works closely with your doctor and primary team.

“I’ve had congestive heart failure for several years. It’s getting more difficult to breathe easily and do the things I enjoy. I’ve been hospitalized frequently. I get into trouble late at night, don’t know who to call, and end up in the emergency unit.”

Palliative care can help with troublesome symptoms like shortness of breath. We can also work with you and your treatment team to find the best possible home support for you. We can also help you think about the kind of care you may want in the future to meet your changing needs.

“I’m in the terminal phase of my illness and would like to make the most of the time I have left. I don’t know if I will be able to stay home or if I want to. I worry about my loved ones and whether I will suffer at the end of my life.”

Palliative care can help patients and their loved ones cope with physical and emotional end-of-life symptoms. Pain and discomfort can be treated in any setting—hospital, home, or facility. Our goal is to help ensure that your remaining time is spent the way you would like.

Mission Statement

Our goal is to ensure that all BIDMC patients and families receive the life-affirming palliative care services they need, and that all BIDMC staff have the support they need in providing those services.
What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is specialized medical care dedicated to promoting the best quality of life for people with advanced or serious illness. Its goals are to alleviate discomfort or difficulties caused by illness or side effects of medication, and to provide compassionate care for patients and their loved ones.

Palliative care is appropriate at any point in a serious or life-threatening illness such as cancer, chronic lung disease, dementia, or heart disease. It can be provided at the same time as curative and life-prolonging treatment. Palliative care is available both during hospitalization and outpatient appointments.

Palliative Care at BIDMC

Our palliative care team includes members of various disciplines: physicians, nurse practitioners, social workers, and interfaith chaplains.

We provide comprehensive and coordinated care for patients on an inpatient and outpatient basis.

We work collaboratively with your primary care providers, helping them to meet your needs. We also facilitate communication between your BIDMC care team and home-based clinicians, hospice providers, and community health workers.

We are available to help patients currently receiving active treatment as well as patients seeking comfort-focused care.

Services Offered

- Symptom management, including but not limited to pain, nausea, depression, delirium, and shortness of breath
- Support for patients and families during transitions to/from a range of settings, including hospital, home, rehabilitation center, hospice residence, and skilled nursing facility
- Family support, including bereavement education and counseling
- Volunteer visitor program for inpatients
- Assistance with medical decision making and advance care planning, including identifying a health care proxy and documenting your wishes for future medical care
- Comprehensive information for patients and families regarding home care services such as visiting nurses or hospice

How do I Request a Consultation?

If you feel that you or a loved one might benefit from a consultation, you can speak to your physician, nurse, or social worker. If you would like more information about our palliative care services, please call 617-667-1320.

Our Standard of Excellence

BIDMC Palliative Care . . .

- is always anchored in realistic and carefully-considered goals that reflect the values of the patient
- includes prompt and effective treatment of physical and emotional symptoms and attention to quality of life
- provides support for patients and their families and caregivers as they seek positive meaning in the face of advanced illness
- ensures that patients and families experience continuity in care during transitions across settings of care
- offers comprehensive bereavement care