

Media release



Department of Health

Palliative Care is more than you think

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Territory Palliative Care is spreading the word. When it comes to palliative care, “it’s more than you think”.

That’s the theme for this year’s National Palliative Care Week.

Territory Palliative Care Occupational Therapist, Juliet Rankin, said programs for individual patients were about more than simply pain relief and ensuring people were comfortable during end-of-life treatment.

“There is a lot more to palliative care than pure physical support,” Ms Rankin said.

“This care can be provided at home; in hospital; in a hospice, or at a nursing home.

“Resources like equipment to help care for the person at home, links to other services such as home help, emotional-support counselling and grief support are all available.”

Royal Darwin Hospital has a multi-disciplinary team providing holistic patient care in its 12-bed hospice.

Pastoral Care Coordinator, Lynette Hansen is a key member of the hospice team.

“She helps people come to terms with their existential distress and to reconcile their grief and loss.

“Patients are also being offered special art programs, music or just peaceful natural settings,” Ms Rankin said.

“Netanela Mirahi coordinates our wonderful Tree of Life program, which gives patients access to a therapeutic art workshop. This particular initiative allows patients to use the medium of art to reframe their story to make them feel stronger and less isolated by highlighting their connection to the broader community.

“In addition to the Tree of Life program people can also become involved in individual and group-music therapy and volunteer music groups.

“Palliative care involves all of the senses that make human beings so interesting. It’s not just about a person’s physical condition. It’s their emotional, psychological and spiritual wellbeing too.”

RDH’s Hospice backs onto a peaceful garden setting, which has recently been rejuvenated.

“Things like having access to a nice garden or the chance to see a fresh face, like a non-medical volunteer; activities like art and some good food are all as powerful as many medications,” Ms Rankin said.

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