

Recreation Therapist provide end of life support for Albertans

Jill Rose and Drew Finnon are Recreation Therapists on the North Zone (NZ) Palliative Care Team. This specialized team provides clients and their families' opportunities, support, and information to continue to participate in purposeful and meaningful leisure near end of life. NZ Palliative Care Recreation Therapists provide interventions based on clients wants and needs. The most common interventions used are Legacy Projects, Meaningful Leisure Participation, Meaningful Family Leisure Participation, and Social Support.

The NZ Palliative Care Team consists of Palliative Care Resource Nurses, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, a Spiritual Health Practitioner, Clinical Nurse Educators, and Recreation Therapists. This Palliative Care Team works to provide extra support for clients/residents of the North Zone as they approach end of life. The NZ Palliative Care Team can support in ways such as medication recommendations, assistance in keeping individuals at home for as long as possible, exploring financial support through other avenues, providing clients and families support during the grieving process, and provide purposeful and meaningful leisure as they transition towards end of life.

Recreation Therapists on this care team provide clients and families with the tools to create Legacy Projects, which are special, personalized projects created by clients that allow their legacy to live on. Clients and their families receive social support, as well assistance to find and utilize community supports. Information is shared with clients and families about energy conservation techniques for a client to continue participating in their meaningful leisure. Ideas and adaptations on how to integrate quality family time to foster enjoyable/memorable moments.

Every client approaching end of life has different goals and outcomes they wish to achieve; NZ Palliative Care Recreation Therapists work individually with each client and their families to determine what customized and specific intervention will provide the most meaningful outcome for the client and how to attain it.

Interventions provided by Palliative Care Recreation Therapists provide clients with a sense of purpose in their day-to-day life, which contributes to overall emotional well-being. Clients and families can create special moments and memories while participating in these interventions, which can lead to peace and comfort throughout the grieving process.