

LESSON PLANS



# PALLIATIVE CARE

FOR HIGH SCHOOL  
STUDENTS

ARPA CANADA.ca

## SUMMARY

Students are exposed to stories of suffering from people with physical disabilities and diseases as well as those who care for them to learn about how palliative care and hospice care can effectively and lovingly relieve suffering.

For more information or to give feedback, contact [info@arpacanada.ca](mailto:info@arpacanada.ca)

# PALLIATIVE CARE

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## OVERVIEW

**Palliative care is holistic, person-centered care for people facing life-limiting illnesses or disabilities.**

Palliative care neither hastens death nor unnaturally prolongs life. Instead, it focuses on giving patients their best possible quality of life despite illness or disability.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information estimates that up to 89% of Canadians could have benefitted from palliative care prior to death – almost everyone whose death was not sudden or unexpected. Despite this great need for palliative care, only 30% of Canadians who need it have access to palliative care, and only 15% have access to early palliative care in their community.

The expansion of euthanasia in Canada is also dramatically altering the face of palliative care.

Palliative care is founded on a right acceptance of the natural cycle from birth to death. But some palliative care facilities now offer euthanasia on site, blurring the distinction between end-of-life care and actively ending the life of the patient.

As Canadians are increasingly seeking euthanasia as a solution to their suffering, palliative care is more important than it has ever been before. In some ways it is analogous to pregnancy care centres for women considering abortions. Christian students should be aware of the incredible relief that palliative care provides for those who are suffering and be able to explain to friends and neighbours alike why it is the compassionate alternative to euthanasia.

For more information on palliative care, See [ARPA's policy report on Palliative Care](#).



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

### How should Christians respond to intense suffering?

This question and lesson plan are intended to go along with ARPA's *Ending Suffering: The Palliative Alternative* documentary. It is designed to get students thinking about how we care for those who are suffering, what matters to those who are suffering, and how Christians can contribute to a biblical perspective on end-of-life care.

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## EXPLAIN PALLIATIVE CARE

Introduce the concept the palliative care. "Palliative care is holistic, person-centred care for people facing life-limiting illnesses or disabilities. Palliative care neither hastens death nor unnaturally prolongs life. Instead, it focuses on giving patients their best possible quality of life despite illness or disability."

Play the documentary *Palliative Care: The Compassionate Alternative* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11UB44i3AnU>

## EXPLORE THE VIDEO SERIES FURTHER

Distribute *Handout 1 – Video Review*. This handout has a detailed outline on what is required in the assignment.

Each student or group of students will choose (or be assigned) one of the 10 parts of the documentary to study. Their task is to:

- View their selected video several times
- Write an informative article about the video they reviewed
- Present their findings to the class
- Consider running their article in their school newsletter or their local newspaper (see [ARPA's EasyLetter system](#) for help finding local papers in your area)

List and description of video segments:

Part 1 (Introduction): <https://youtu.be/20EfBwqplYs>

Part 2: <https://youtu.be/zsoJXN9ULaE> An interview with the mother and daughter of Jason Linde, who passed away after a six-year battle with ALS.

Part 3: <https://youtu.be/Lrps8vR1uOU> An interview with Pieter Harsevoort, an elementary school teacher in Hamilton, ON, who describes himself as receiving palliative care his entire life.

Part 4: <https://youtu.be/X0HqyakKOI4> A look at what palliative care looks like for the elderly, and how the offer of assisted suicide places intolerable burdens on our seniors.

Part 5: <https://youtu.be/k-1pX6bXpLE> A chat with palliative care nurse Gayle Jensen van Doorn.

Part 6: <https://youtu.be/uRduj-HNP00> A conversation with palliative care nurse Helen Van Dyk.

Part 7: <https://youtu.be/PZltYkF0w4I> A conversation with palliative care doctor Neil Hilliard.

Part 8: <https://youtu.be/G4a3tIHjGwQ> Dr. Theodore Van Raalte provides a call to the church on how to respond to the new culture of assisted suicide.

Part 9: <https://youtu.be/mZHLwrhNOEI> Rick Ludwig, funeral home director, shares his perspective on the importance and value of palliative care.

Part 10: <https://youtu.be/r7gyydN8FrE> Palliative care home nurse Helen 't Hart talks about home care.

Part 11: <https://youtu.be/4ki3ceRc-oc> A conversation with policy specialist Ray Pennings.

Part 12: <https://youtu.be/lnvs2dVdo2c> Conclusion

## FIELD TRIP

Contact a local nursing home, hospital, hospice, or palliative care facility and organize a class service trip there. Students could perform music for the patients, sing Christmas carols around Christmas time, play games with the patients, or hand out flowers.

# VIDEO REVIEW

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Your task is to review one of ten videos (Parts 2-11) from the ARPA documentary series *Palliative Care: The Compassionate Alternative* and write a 2-3 page article describing what you learn.

Various points that you should include in your report are:

- 1) Provide the details of the speaker (name, where are they from, occupation). Give some good information on who this person is and how the issue of euthanasia is relevant to their life.
- 2) How is the interviewee connected to the area of palliative care? How do they define palliative care in their life?
- 3) According to the interviewee, why do people choose euthanasia? Is there any evidence to suggest how these people came to consider euthanasia?
- 4) What appears to be this person's outlook on life? How do they view life?
- 5) How have these people experienced the love and support of community in their life? If this is not answered, how does your interviewee describe love and support of community?
- 6) According to the interviewee, what are the challenges to improving palliative care?
- 7) Does this person provide practical recommendations about what we as a community or church could do? If so, what are those recommendations?
- 8) Were there any references to Christianity? If so, what role did that play?
- 9) Pick a clip that is approximately fifteen seconds long that really made an impression on you and play that for the class.
- 10) Share a quote from the video and explain why you chose it.