



AVILA INSTITUTE
of GERONTOLOGY, Inc.
Education for Compassionate Care

Geriatric Spiritual Care Certificate Program

*A certification program for those seeking to enter the field
of spiritual care to serve the spiritual needs of elders.*



2010 Geriatric Spiritual Care Certificate Program

Spiritual Care is particularly crucial for frail elders. The issues that focus on life and death, meaning and purpose, loneliness and loss are often magnified when the individual is placed in a long-term care facility. This certificate program will teach you how to attend to their spiritual needs.

The Geriatric Spiritual Care Certificate Program consists of 120 hours. It is comprised of four modules, 15 hours each, a 5 hour Community Networking class and 55 hours of clinical time. The course modules will involve a team approach and are taught over 4 weekends, one a month from January to April in Germantown, NY.

Module One **Dynamics of Spiritual Care**

Participants will explore the journey they have taken through a personal life review. This experience will help participants to better understand the spiritual journey of our elders. We need to keep in mind that their spirituality has grown out of their own individual and unique life experiences. Spiritual activities will be offered that would be appropriate for the elderly in any setting. The most basic activity is that of prayer and its relationship to the needs and expectations of the elderly. Ritual will also be discussed, with emphasis placed on what is liturgically appropriate. The Magesterium and the Sacramental life of the Christian will be explored as it relates to the role and activities of the spiritual care giver.

Objectives

- To develop the technique of life review as a source for rendering geriatric spiritual care.
- To recognize the individuality of spirituality.
- To acquire an understanding of prayer, ritual, and sacraments in the life of the elderly.

Components

1. Live Review/Assessment
2. Spirituality
3. Prayer/Ritual/Sacrament

Module Two **Theology of Suffering**

While almost all individuals experience some form of suffering during their lives, it is especially true for the elderly. While suffering is material in nature it also has a spiritual dimension with which the geriatric spiritual care giver needs to become familiar.

Participants will research this perspective of suffering in both the Old and New Testaments. Here the emphasis will be on the spiritual value of the Paschal Mystery as personified by Christ and Theological reflections will be the tool. The impact of loss and separation will be explored, efforts will be made to recognize that grief is a natural process throughout our life cycle. The participant's ability to deal with death precedes their ability to help individuals deal with loss and bereavement. The presenter will explore skills that can be utilized in dealing with death and dying.

Objectives

- To identify Old and New Testament verses as a means of better understanding a theology of suffering.
- To emphasize the Spiritual Value of the Paschal Mystery.
- To come to terms with the reality of death and the dying process.
- To comprehend the dynamics of grief and appropriate responses.

Components

1. Theological Reflection/Care Partnering
2. Dynamics of Grief, Loss & Separation
3. Ministry to the Dying



Module Three **Active Listening**

Active Listening relates to the role of those engaged in Geriatric Spiritual Care. This module involves three inter-related components, namely, the dynamics of active listening, the use and response to silence, and a distinction between symptom and problem. The interaction deals with one aspect of communicating. The emphasis is on non-verbal communication, which involves body language. It promotes an understanding of the need of the elderly to verbalize and the absence of a need to be preached at. The presentation will attempt to help the participants explore the technique and significance of active listening.

Active listening builds on Carl Roger's technique of client-centered therapy. It helps residents to come to terms with their own feelings. Active listening also involves the ability to deal with silence during the interactive process. Experiences of dealing with silence will be made available to the participants. Active listening also involves the ability to recognize different types of behavior in people with dementia.

Observation, discussion and response mechanisms will be addressed. The distinction between symptom and problem will be made. This distinction in spiritual care is essential, since the symptom may be an indication of an existing problem. Signs and symbols will be discussed as a communication tool to elicit response to their Faith Tradition. Efforts in communication skills with family and staff will be explored. Role playing will be utilized as a means of demonstrating this point. The need for referrals will be explored and the importance of a team approach.

Objectives

- To better understand the technique and the significance of active listening in the interactive process with the elderly.
- To become more comfortable in dealing with silence.
- To recognize behavior as manifested by people with dementia.
- To better understand the distinction between symptom and problem.
- To understand the dynamics with family and staff.

Components

1. Listening Skills
2. Communication to Residents w/Dementia
3. Understanding Dynamics w/Family & Staff

Module Four

Moral Ethics

We live in a very complex society and confusion tends to rise over what constitutes appropriate ethical behavior. This module contains three components, namely, practical ethics, comparative religion, and case studies as a source for decision making.

First, in covering practical ethics we will attempt to address the question: Why is there confusion over ethics? The presenter will explore the sources of values, ethics, religious ethics, law and etiquette. The distinction between ethics and moral theology will be addressed through a basic presentation of Major Religions. The emphasis will be on the

origins and similarities in the major religions. Case studies on ethical issues will be reviewed for use in class. The ethical theories and principles will be used as a support system in providing quality of life. The importance of confidentiality will be stressed. The practices and procedures for ministry will be detailed.

Objectives

- To enhance the participants' understanding of the theories and principles of ethics as a source for a decision making process.
- To broaden an understanding of the major religions of the world and their influences in creating values within society.
- To establish a methodology for discovering right and wrong.
- To utilize case studies as a source of understanding the decision making process.

Components

1. Practical Ethics/Moral Theology
2. Comparative Religions
3. Review of Case Studies/Practical Ministerial Details

Community Networking

Community Networking will identify the importance of forming a Spiritual Care Network. It will also discuss different parish programs that are designed specifically for the elderly.

Objectives

- To identify components of a Spiritual Care Network
- To understand parish ministry to the elderly.



TUITION

Tuition costs \$2500.00 and includes meals, overnight accommodations, all materials and 65 hours of class time and 55 hours of clinical time.

Scholarships are available. Optional payment plan is also available. Please contact Sr. M. Peter Lillian for information.

CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION

To receive a certificate the following criteria must be met:

- Attendance to all sessions
- Fulfillment of all assignments
- Commitment to at least 55 hours of Clinical Time at one of the approved sites.

TENTATIVE CLASS DATES & LOCATION

Classes are held in Germantown, NY one weekend per month from January – April.

- Weekend 1 Jan 15 – Jan 17, 2010
- Weekend 2 Feb 26 – Feb 28, 2010
- Weekend 3 Mar 19 – Mar 21, 2010
- Weekend 4 Apr 16 – April 18, 2010

CLINICAL SITE & DATES

The clinical experience is normally completed over 9 days during May in Albany, NY or Queens, NY.

Clinical is tentatively scheduled for May 10 – May 18, 2010

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Please contact the Avila Institute of Gerontology, Inc. at 518.537.5000 for more information and an