

“The RESPECT (Research in Palliative and End-of-Life Communication and Training) Center”

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Abstract

Communication is crucial to decision-making and high-quality care for patients with serious illness, but there are significant gaps in communication among patients, families, and clinicians. The Research in Palliative and End-of-Life Communication and Training (RESPECT) Center was funded in July 2010 under the IUPUI Signature Center Initiative to advance the science of palliative and end-of-life communication. The mission of the RESPECT Center is to build a collaborative, interdisciplinary scientific community of researchers and clinicians to work together to advance the science of communication in palliative and end-of-life care across the lifespan. The Center capitalizes on the complementary and expanding expertise at IU to support the advancement of research on communication in populations with serious illness that is life-threatening, debilitating, or terminal.

The Center is working to achieve its mission through three primary activities. First, the Center convenes researchers with shared expertise to utilize the collective wisdom of the interdisciplinary group in grant development and submission. The RESPECT Center uses a peer review meeting model to provide a forum for students, trainees, and faculty to develop and refine their grant writing activities focused on palliative and end-of-life care from idea development to grant revision. Second, research development is augmented by funding opportunities for peer-reviewed pilot studies. Pilot funding is designed to attract new researchers to this area of study and to facilitate the generation of pilot data for more experienced researchers who are carving a new path in the field. Finally, several outreach activities are being undertaken with the goal of fostering new partnerships for translational science. The RESPECT Visiting Scholar series brings in external experts to present as part of a conference series and to meet with research faculty, clinicians, and administration to discuss issues related to advancing palliative and end-of-life care research at IU. Additionally, a city-wide conference will be convened in year 3 to bring together members of the health care professional community with an interest in evidence-based practice in palliative and end-of-life care. The long-term goal of the RESPECT Center is to secure funding to permit the continued operation and expansion of Center activities.