

3<sup>rd</sup> International conference on

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## Highlighting the role of a palliative care social worker in end of life care during COVID 19 pandemic

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Our world has become more complex and difficult with the emergence of the COVID19 pandemic. We are forced to face challenging situations we have never experienced before. Death toll grew exponentially, and our health care system was pushed to its limits. The need to support patients, families and healthcare professionals due to the overwhelming emotional distress brought on by the pandemic increased. Crucial amid a pandemic are health care providers that can assist patients and families during this time of crisis. Social workers are vital to holistically address the psychological, social, emotional and financial challenges through action, intervention and use of resources. Currently, there are limited literature that outlines and documents what social workers, specifically palliative care social workers can assist with during pandemics. However, in this case report, we were able to describe that having a dedicated PCSW in the PCT during this time of COVID19 pandemic has been shown to be very beneficial for this patient's and his family's situation. The PCSW's utilization of resources, creativity and passion to assist patients and families during this unprecedented time has truly reflected her resilience and sustainability as an integral member of

a PCT. The telemedicine resources have allowed for the P CSW to find connections with and between patients and their families during this time of social distancing. The legacy projects allowed for the patient's family to find meaning in the memories they had with the patient. The psychosocial and spiritual care provided by our PCSW (in tandem with our PCC) were evidently valuable in supporting and guiding the patient's wife through her decision making and grieving process. This case study epitomizes how flexible, resourceful and resilient PCSWs are during times of crisis.

### Speaker Biography

Sarah Grudier, LCSW, APHSW-C is a licensed clinical social worker with the Supportive & Palliative Care Department at Houston Methodist Hospital. She holds a master's degree in Social Work with a specialization in Gerontology from the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work. She holds certification in advanced palliative social work. In her current role, she specializes in counseling and supporting patients and families coping with advanced illness, anticipatory grief, and psychosocial issues at end of life. She provides training and education in palliative social work and is published in the Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care.

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