

# Emotional Intelligence in the Home

Eight domains, rapid field tips, family style detection, and cultural intelligence entry points.

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## THE EIGHT DOMAINS

### 1 Self-Awareness

Know your emotional baseline before you walk in. You came from a difficult visit. You are running late. You are hungry. These states show up in your body language, voice, and patience. Name them first.

### 2 Self-Regulation

Feeling something is not the same as acting on it. A family member's displaced anger belongs to them — receive it without absorbing it. This requires practice, not just willpower.

### 3 Empathy Over Sympathy

Sympathy puts you across from the family. Empathy puts you with them. Sympathy says "at least." Empathy says "I am here with you in this." Hospice families know the difference instantly.

### 4 Family Style Detection

Read the room in the first 90 seconds. Expressive or contained? Information-driven or relationship-driven? Religious or secular? Optimize language, posture, and pacing to match — not to perform, but to connect.

### 5 Communication Mirroring

Match their vocabulary. If they call it "passing," use passing. If they say "dying," meet them there. If they are formal, be formal. This is not inauthenticity — it is respect expressed through language.

### 6 Conflict Navigation

Family conflict at end-of-life is not random — it is old pain surfacing under pressure. Do not adjudicate. Name it gently, redirect to the patient's comfort, and hold the container.

### 7 Silence as Skill

Most clinicians are trained to fill silence. In hospice, silence is often the most therapeutic intervention available. Sit with it. The family will fill it when they are ready.



## 8 Cultural Intelligence

Death rituals, gender roles, family hierarchy, and the meaning of suffering vary profoundly across cultures. Curiosity before assumption. "Help me understand how your family thinks about this" is always a safe entry point.

### RAPID FIELD TIPS

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#### **A** Adapt your physical level

Sit when they are sitting. Do not stand over an 80-year-old widow in a recliner. Get to their eye level. This is respect made physical.

#### **B** Name the elephant early

"This is one of the hardest things a family goes through." Say it before they have to. This releases pressure from the room.

#### **C** The pause before hard questions

A 2-second pause before answering "how long does he have?" signals you have taken the question seriously. Instant answers feel dismissive.

#### **D** Own your uncertainty

"I do not know exactly, but I can tell you what I am seeing" is more trustworthy than false precision. Families hear the honesty before the content.

#### **E** Be presentable, always adapt

Your appearance communicates respect before you say a word. Dress for each family's context. Read the room.

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*Reference: Emotional intelligence and quality of nursing care. Iran J Nurs Midwifery Res. 2021;26(4):358–363. PMC8344623.*