

Virtual Work Experience: Palliative Medicine

Due to the pandemic, gaining work experience in a medical setting is not possible. As an alternative these videos have been made to allow you to gain some insight into what working as a doctor can be like. Alongside watching these videos, we think it would be a valuable exercise to work through this companion document as a guide.

While watching the video, **pause** when you reach a **BOLD BLUE TIMESTAMP**. These are prompts for you to **reflect on** what you're watching as well as your own experience. There are some links to websites, (which you can refer to once you've finished watching the video) to help you think about some of the questions. You might find it useful to make a note of some of your ideas for future reference- such as to be able to talk about in a personal statement or interview.

If you have any questions about what you've seen or read, please do get in touch with us at advice@youcanbeadoctor.co.uk.

Dr Kathleen McGeough is a **Foundation Year (FY)** doctor working in the Marie Curie **Hospice** doing a **Palliative Medicine job**. An FY doctor is a newly qualified doctor 1 or 2 years out of medical school. They take care of day-to-day jobs such as performing blood tests, taking notes and prescribing drugs or fluids. Most of the bigger decisions they make (such as deciding on a management plan for a patient) are checked over by a more senior doctor.

1:57

Kathleen is working in a **hospice**.

- Do you have any ideas about what a hospice is or the services it can provide? Who receives care in a hospice? Who might work in a hospice?
- <https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/blog/hospices-where-people-go-die/53836>
- After reading this article by Marie Curie, think about whether any of your preconceptions about hospices were slightly wrong.

2:30

Kathleen points out that one of the most important parts of her job is **communication**.

- Can you think of some of the features of good communication skills?
- What things have you done that you think have helped you to improve your own communication skills? This might be at school, during a volunteering role, or in your personal life.
- <https://www.bhf.org.uk/for-professionals/healthcare-professionals/blog/16-ways-to-improve-your-communication-skills-with-patients>. Read through these tips for improving communication skills. Which of these do you think you are strong at? Which do you think you could work on? How do you think you could tackle them?
- Think about how you might need to change the way you communicate depending on who you are talking to- for example colleagues, patients, relatives and visitors.

3:57

Kathleen talks about the difficulties of carrying out more conversations over the phone during the pandemic.

- What makes talking over the phone more difficult than in person?
- Doctors have to do lots of communicating over the phone. Do you feel comfortable talking to people over the phone?

5:06

Have you heard of a **“Do Not Resuscitate” order**?

- Think about what **CPR** (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation) involves. Can you think of any situations where CPR may be unlikely to work?
- Read this page about DNACPR decisions: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/do-not-attempt-cardiopulmonary-resuscitation-dnacpr-decisions/>. Find out who is involved in making these decisions.