

Science of Care Summit March 21-22, 2024



We all die... but we are not always afforded grace and dignity at the end of life. The goal of the Science of Care Summit was to delve into the science of how people care for one another, particularly at end of life. The summit focused on how humanistic values can be further infused into end-of-life care to alleviate suffering and promote quality of life. The event was hosted by Dr. Susan Bluck (Psychology) and Dr. Carma Bylund (Health Outcomes and Biomedical Informatics) and funded through a three-year grant from the National Cancer Institute (NIH R01CA253330). Drs. Bluck and Bylund presented research on two pillars of humanistic care: recognizing seriously ill and dying individuals as unique human beings and empathy in patient-provider interactions. Experts from across the nation joined with UF faculty and students to present and exchange ideas. Presentations included the need for dignity in end-of-life care (Dr. Kittelson, Division Chief, UF Palliative Care Program, COM). Postdoctoral associates, graduate students and undergraduate students presented their research in a lunch hour poster session. Interactive activities to foster creative consideration of humanism in care included: breakout sessions addressing topics from illness acknowledgement to existential/spiritual concerns, a guided personal grief exercise (Dr. Neimeyer, <https://www.portlandinstitute.org/>), a Before I Die Wall (<https://beforeidieproject.com/>) and participation of Shirley Bloodworth, UF Citizen Scientist, who shared her own story of living with cancer.