Surgical Palliative Care Immersion Training
Instructions for Clinical Role Play

I. Definition:
- Role play refers to an activity where learners simulate a clinical scenario by assuming one or more roles

II. Purpose:
- Provides the opportunity to practice a clinical situation they will likely encounter
- Facilitates the opportunity for the learner to gain empathy, and/or a different perspective

III. Methods to Introduce Role Play
- Explain the activity's objectives and expected outcomes
- Distribute copies of the role play's clinical scenario to the learners with specific instructions (e.g., break into dyads, one plays the patient, one plays the physician)
- Demonstrate the role play in front of the learners (may wish to include a clinical scenario where the participants don't display the desired behaviors, but then always follow up with a demonstration of desired behaviors)
- Determine whether or not someone (with the group, or outside) will observe and assess, and provide formal feedback to the learners
- Be clear about the time frame, and when learners should switch positions
- Explain that there will be adequate time to debrief

IV. How to Debrief
- Prepare learners at the start of the session that they will undergo debriefing
- At the end of the demonstrated role play, ask learners to share their reflections: What went well? What would they do differently? What potential barriers do they anticipate?
- At the end of the group role play (e.g., dyads) ask learners to share their reflections in two stages: Individual Dyads, followed by the Larger Group. They should be prepared to answer: What went well? What would they do differently? What potential barriers did they experience? How might they overcome these barriers?
- Before leaving, give each learner five minutes to write down 2 “take-aways”

V. Strategies to Overcome Challenges
- Recognize that learners may feel uncomfortable with role play, and discuss that openly
- Reinforce the purpose of role play, and the positive impact on patient care
- Be sure to debrief afterwards to reinforce positive behaviors and clarify misconceptions