



DUKE
INSTITUTE
ON CARE AT
THE END OF
LIFE



Faith Communities & End-of-Life Care: Opportunity for Growth

December 2008

Introduction

People experiencing illness, end of life and grief, often turn –or return– to their faith communities for help in facing the emotional, practical and spiritual challenges these situations bring with them. Unfortunately, many clergy and church-lay leaders report that they often feel ill-equipped to offer what is needed during these important times.

To learn more about faith communities and end-of-life care, the Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life (ICEOL) and Project Compassion surveyed faith community leaders to understand how they address issues of serious illness, end of life and grief in their congregations and what resources they need to help them do this important work.

SURVEY AREAS

- Faith leader's comfort offering care and support for serious illness, end of life and grief
- Types of support congregations currently offer to members
- Materials and resources most needed by faith leaders to improve end-of-life ministries

ICEOL and Project Compassion are currently working together to develop a toolkit for congregations based on the needs identified through this research and highlighted in the slides that follow. "The Unbroken Circle: A Toolkit for Congregations around Illness, End of Life and Grief" will be launched in spring 2009.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

Faith Leaders Comfort Level Ministering in End-of-Life Situations

Most comfortable and prepared:

- Offering one-on-one support such as pastoral and lay visits, cards and letters and discussions of spiritual concerns
- Fulfilling typical roles such as performing rituals, funerals and memorial services
- Working with other spiritual care providers
- Providing grief support when death is expected

Least comfortable and prepared:

- Offering broad-based support such as informational materials, educational programs and sermons on end-of-life issues
- Working with health care providers
- Providing grief support when death is unexpected

End-of-life Care Resources Faith Community Leaders Want and Need

Resource types:

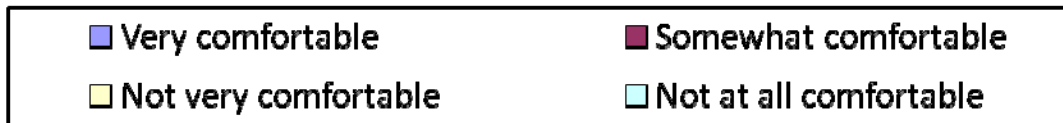
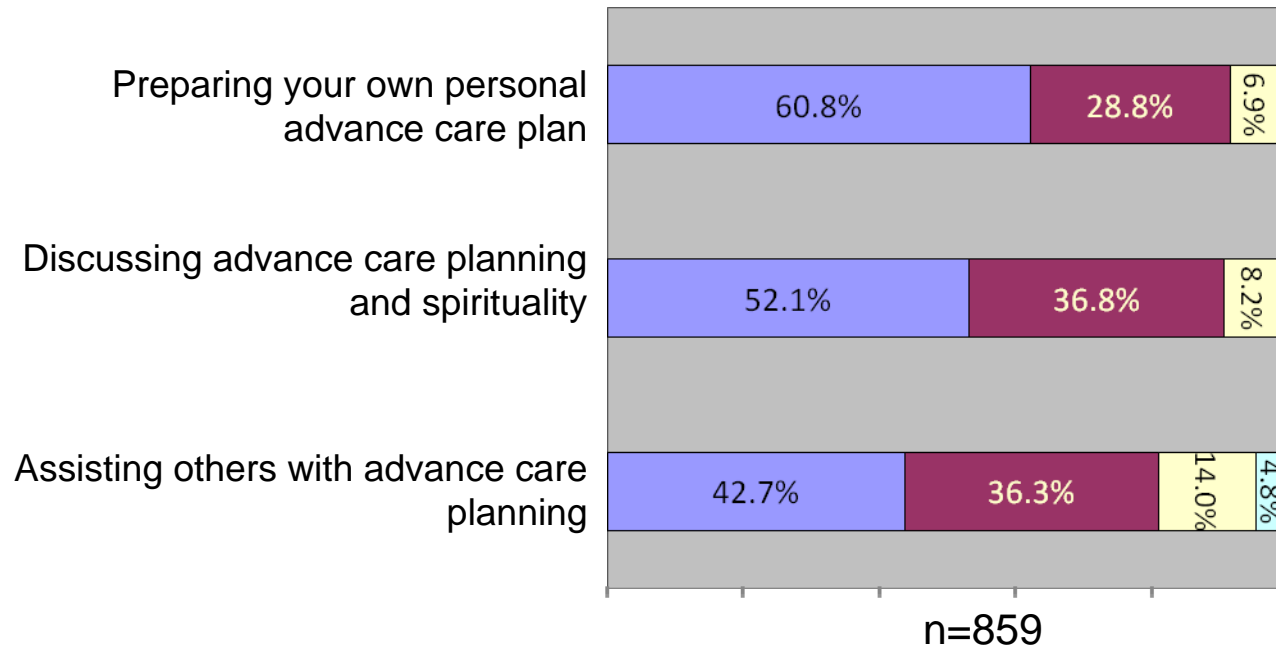
- Lay leader training
- Member education
- Curriculum for theological and spiritual reflection
- Clergy education

Topics of interest:

- Serious illness and caregiving
- End-of-life
- Grief support
- Advance care planning

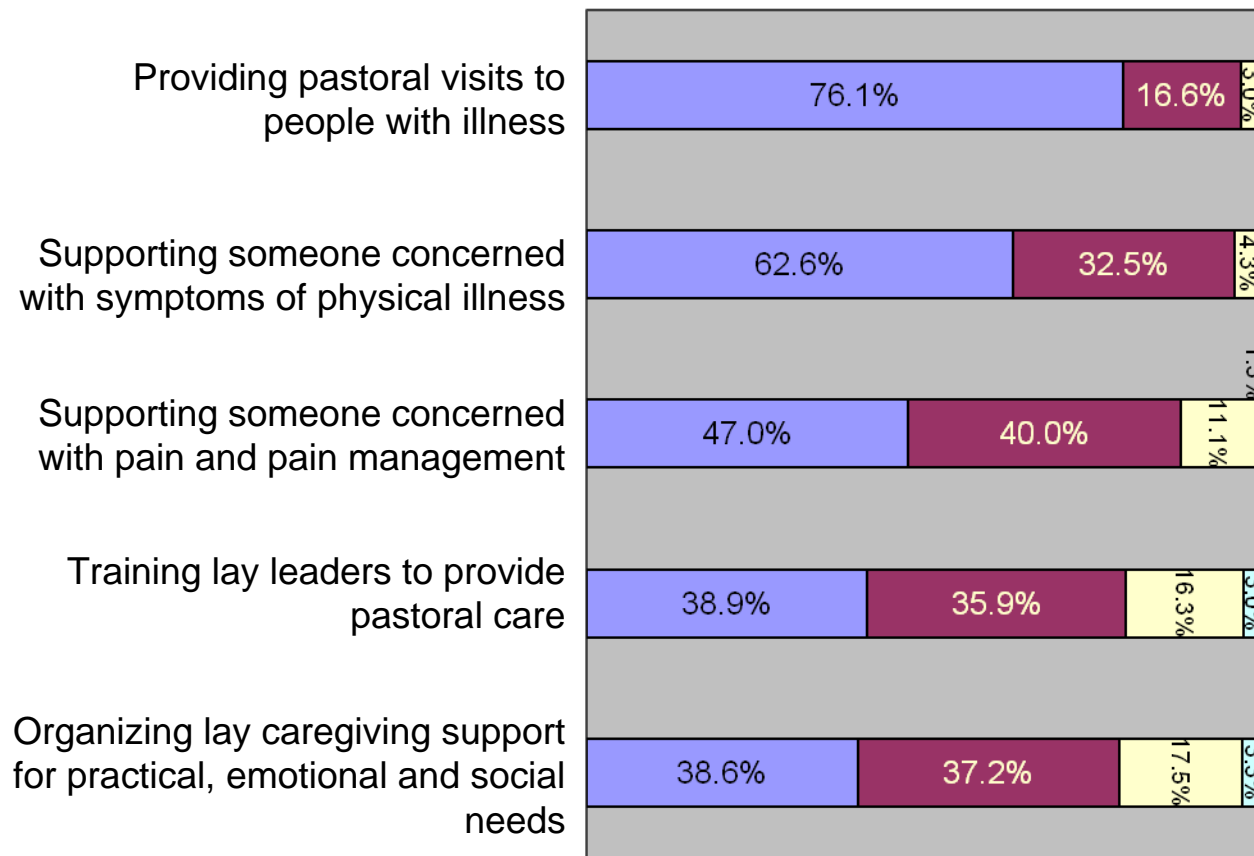
Faith Leaders Comfort with Providing End-of-Life Support

Comfort with Providing Support for Advance Care Planning



Faith leaders are more comfortable preparing their own advance care plan than assisting others.

Comfort with Providing Support for Serious Illness and Caregiving

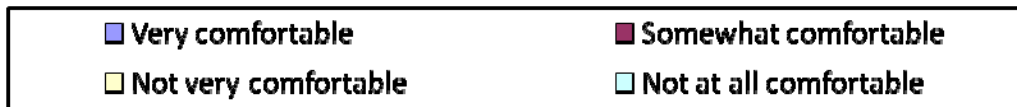
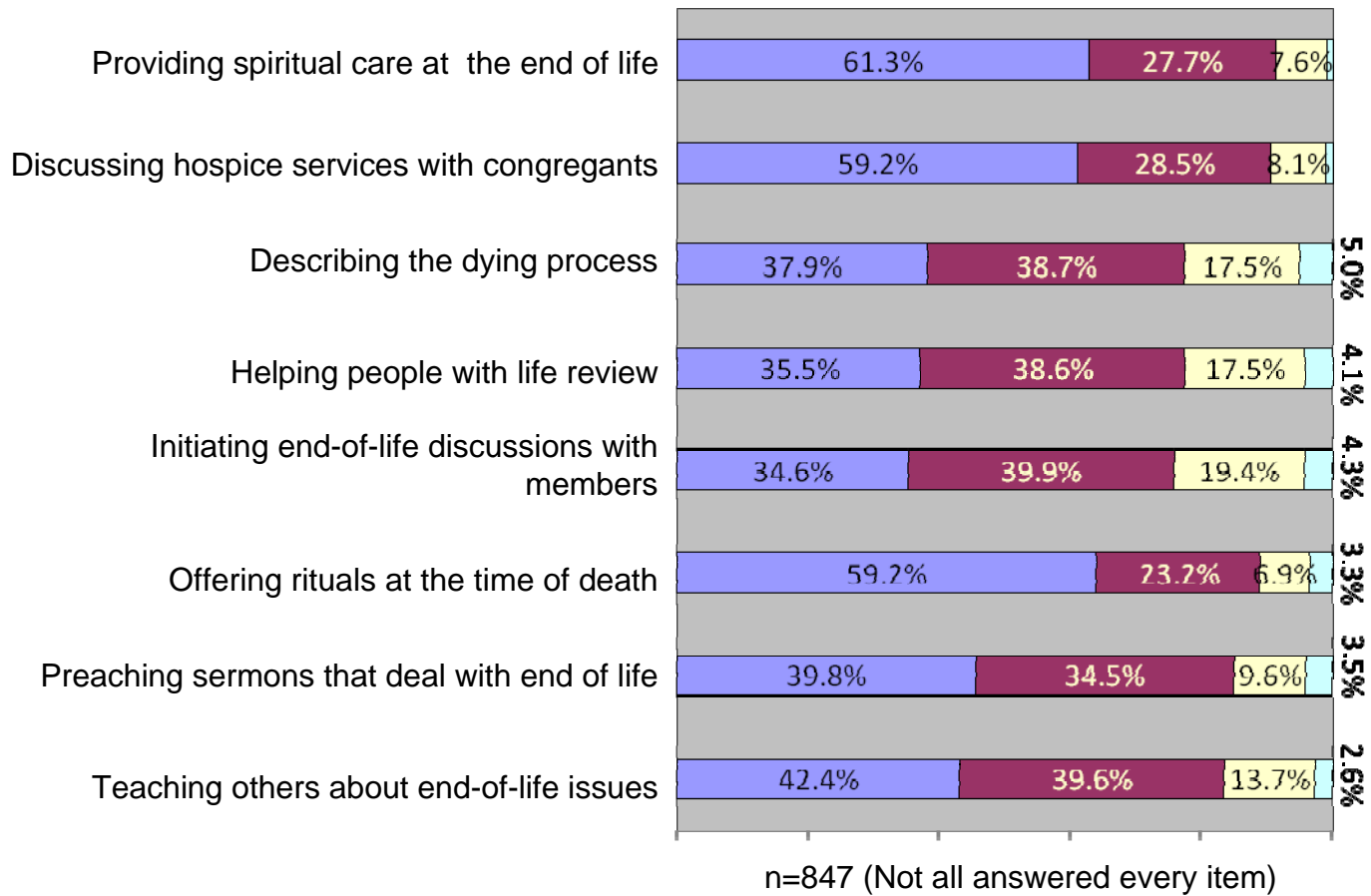


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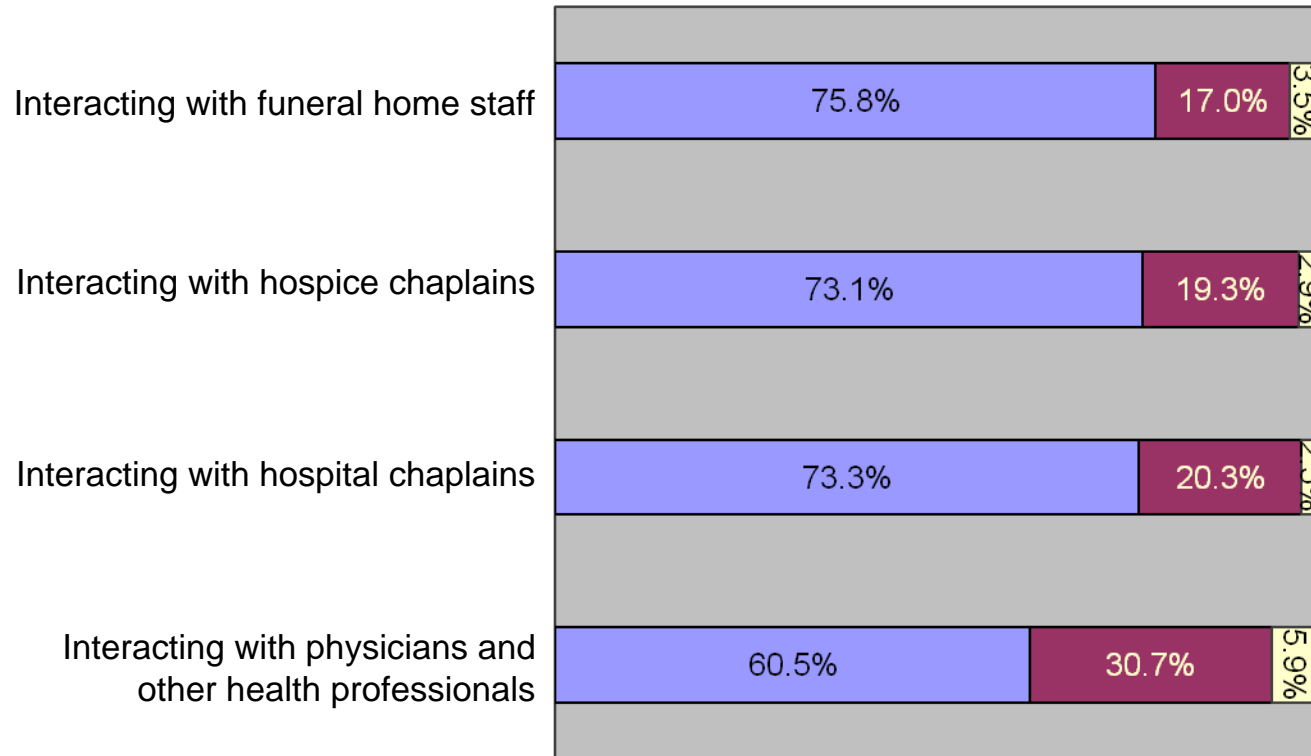
Faith leaders are most comfortable providing direct pastoral care to members who are sick and least comfortable training or organizing others to support members.

Comfort with Providing Support for End-of-Life Issues



While faith leaders report that they are comfortable providing spiritual care at the end of life, they are less comfortable initiating end-of-life discussions with members.

Comfort Interacting with Other Professional Caregivers around EOL Matters

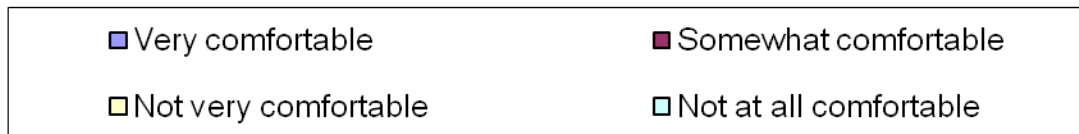
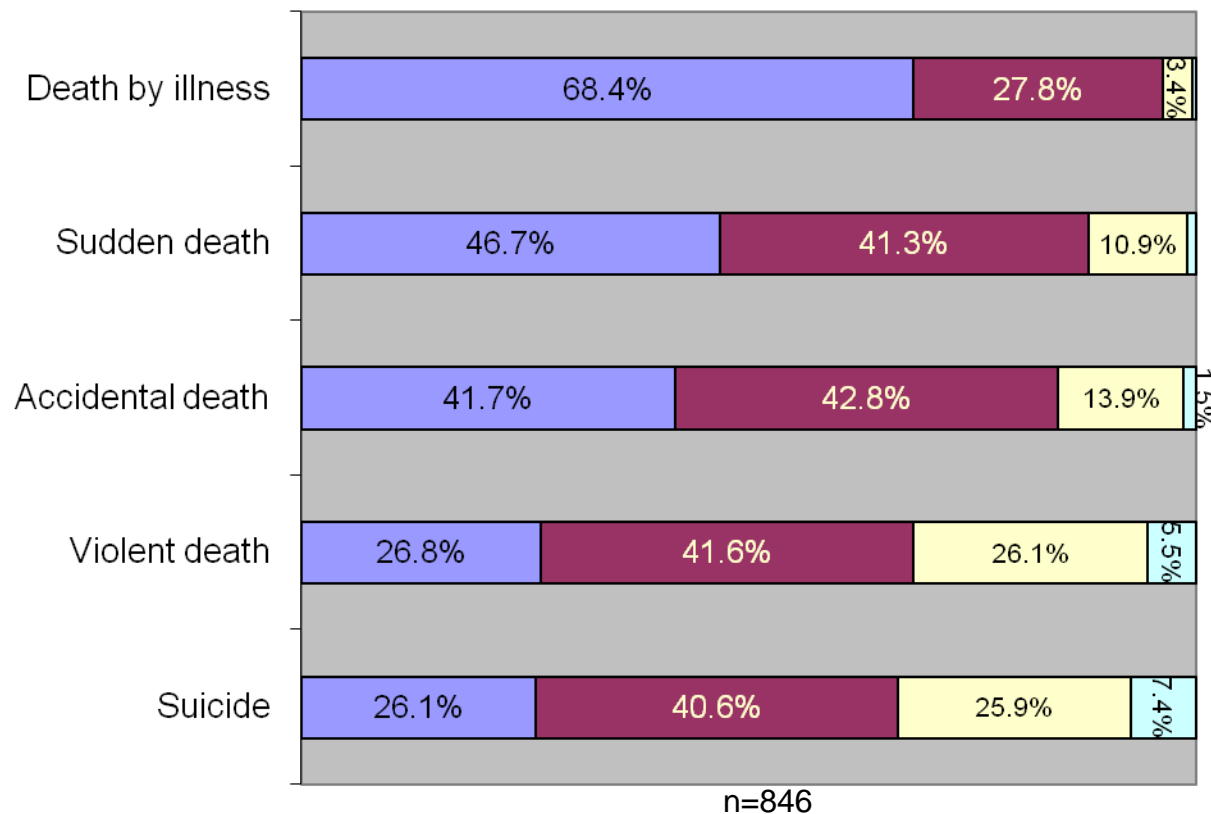


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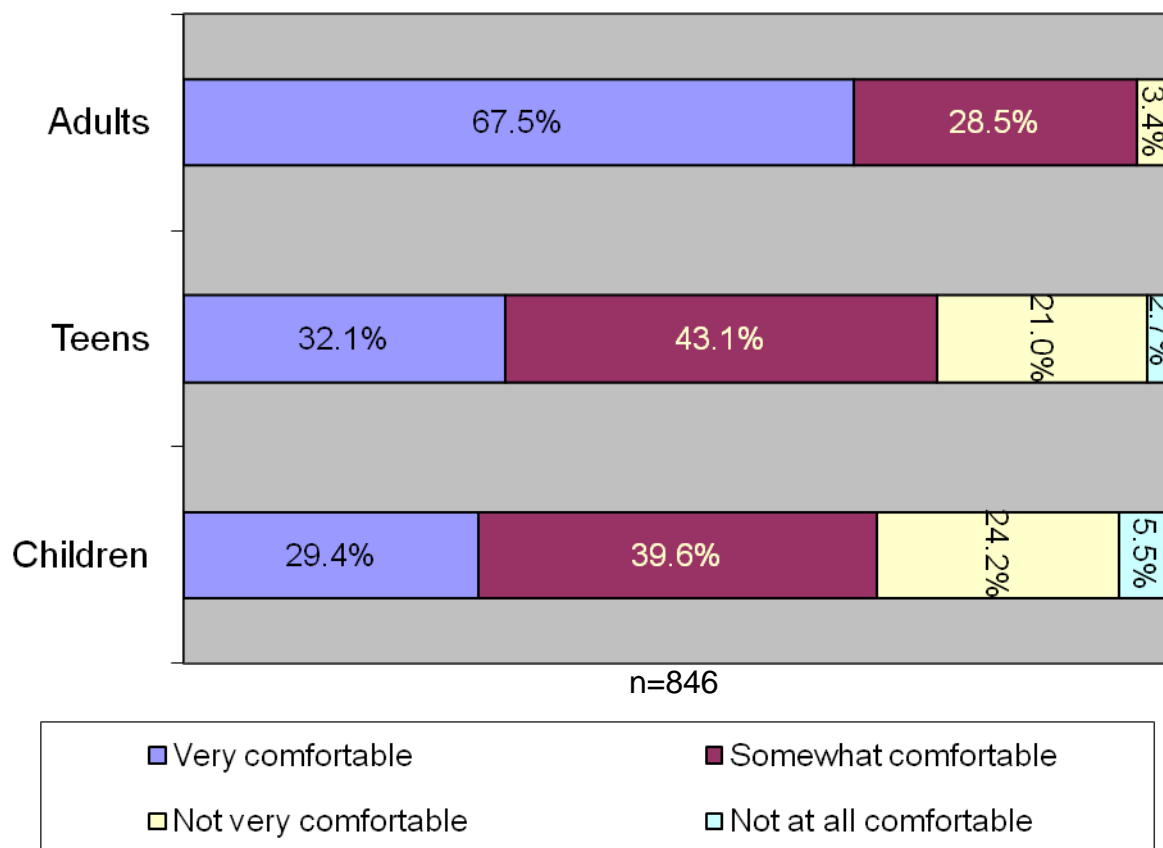
Faith leaders are least comfortable interacting with physicians and other health professionals in end-of-life situations.

Comfort Providing Grief Support for Different Types of Death



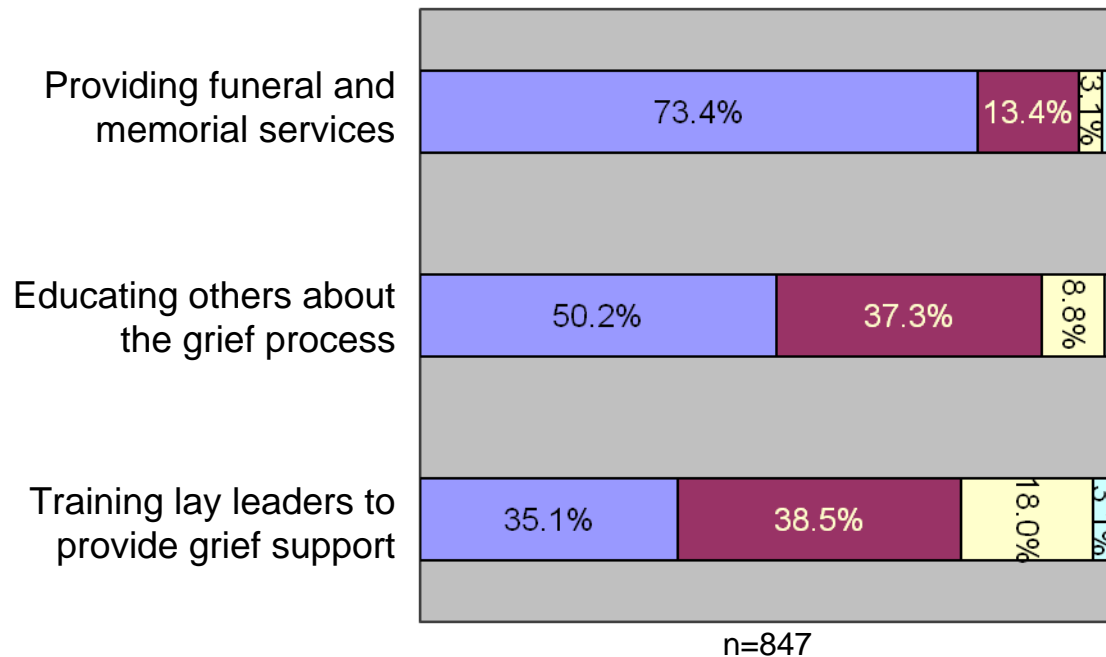
Faith leaders are most comfortable providing grief support following an “expected” death (from illness).

Comfort Providing Grief Support for Different Populations



Faith leaders are much more comfortable providing grief support for adults than for children or teens.

Comfort with Offering Other Grief Support

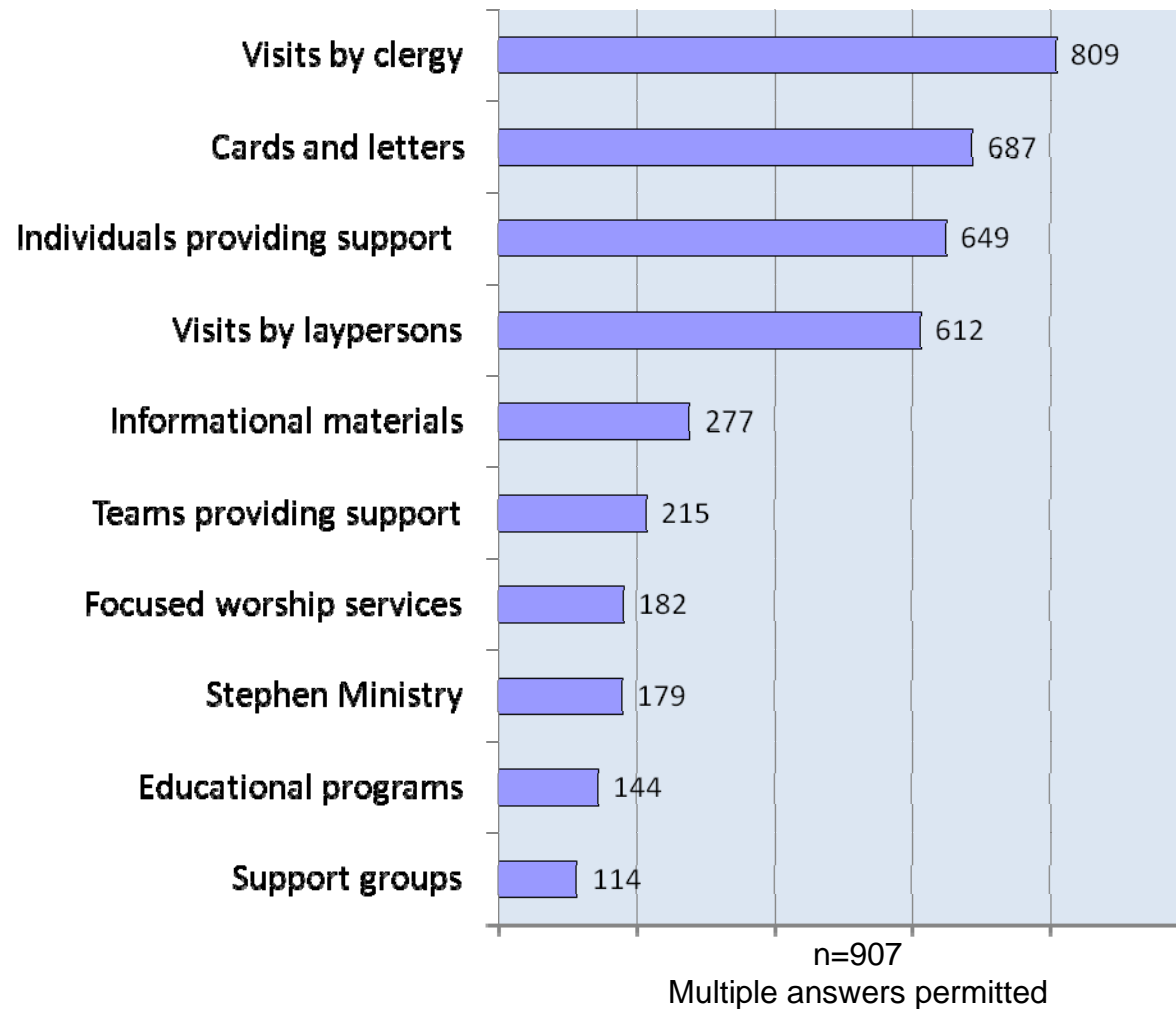


When it comes to grief support, faith leaders are more comfortable with familiar tasks, such as funeral and memorial services than with educating and training others.

End-of-Life Care Resources

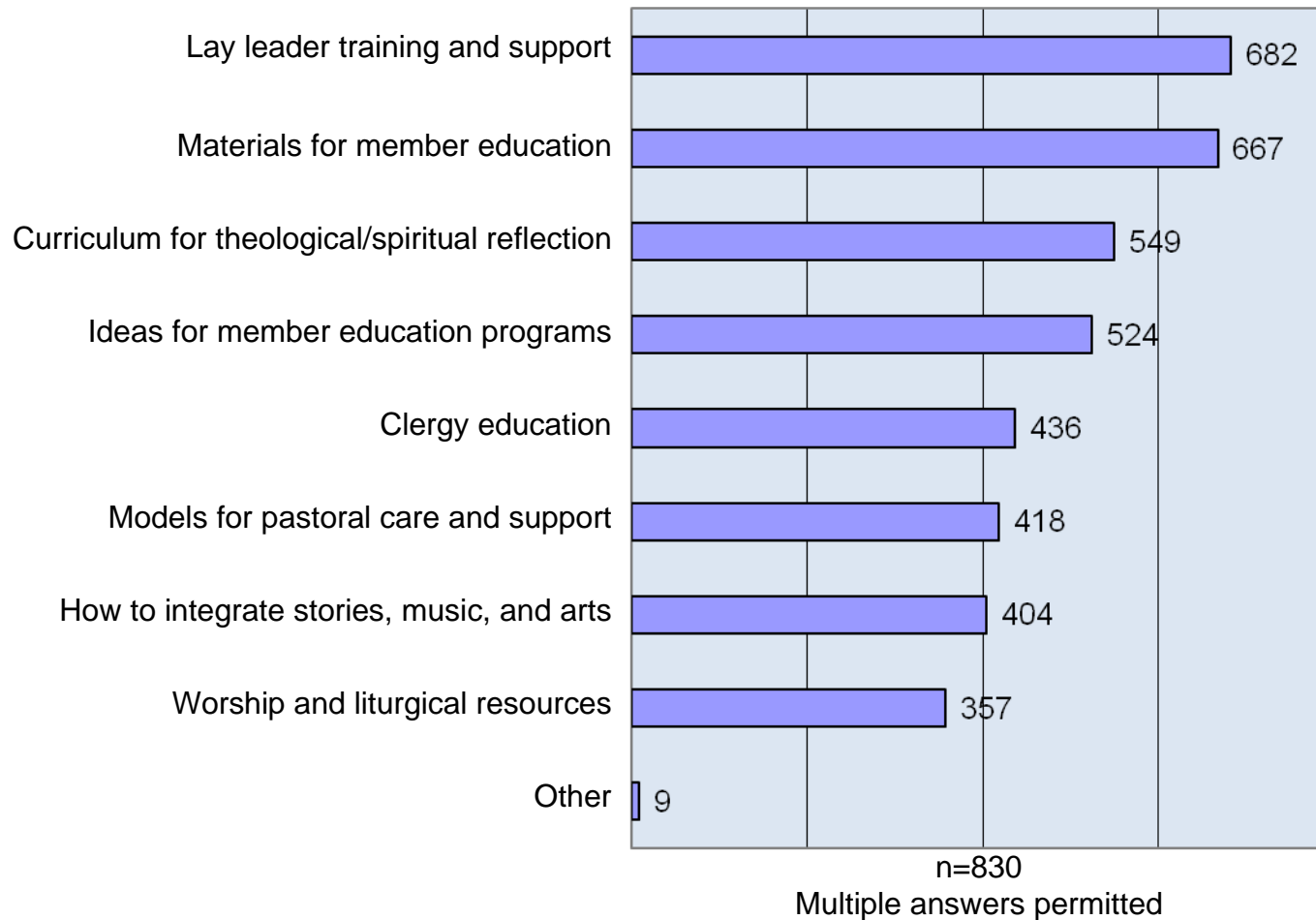
What Faith Leaders Offer and Need

EOL Support Offered by Faith Communities



In the area of end-of-life care, congregations are more likely to offer individualized support, such as visits and cards, than broader-based efforts, such as informational materials, educational programs or support groups and teams.

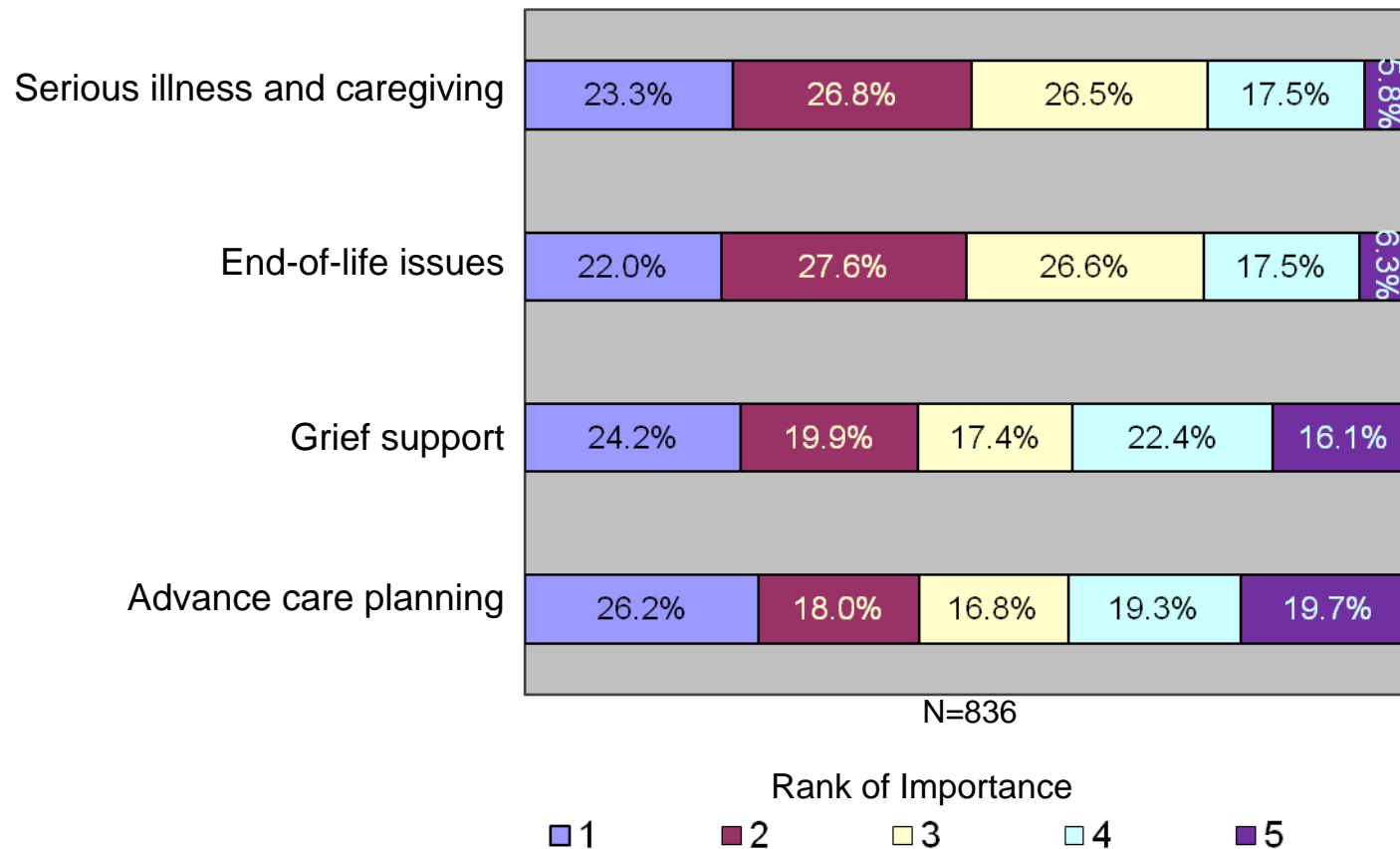
Types of End-of-Life Resources Faith Leaders Report They Need



To improve end-of-life care in congregations, faith leaders report the most need for educational materials and training for lay leaders and members.

EOL Topics of Interest for New Resources

Faith leaders report about equal need for resources on a variety of end-of-life topics.

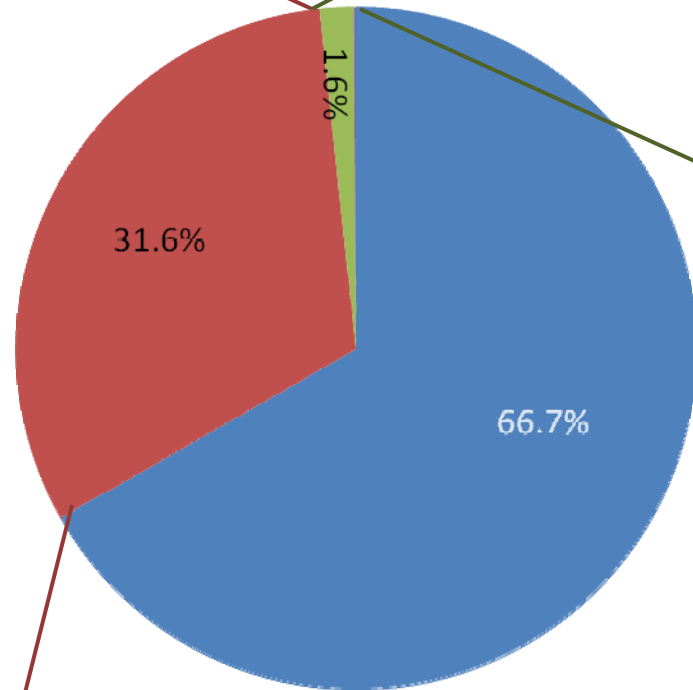


Survey Demographics

- 926 respondents (faith community detail follows)
- 92% Caucasian; 5% African American; others are Native American, Hispanic, and Asian
- 77% have post-graduate or professional degrees
- 66% are between 45 and 64 years of age; 23% are under 45; 11% are 65 or older
- 53% live in North Carolina; 9% live in Virginia; small numbers of respondents came from 39 other states
- 73% are clergy (58% have 5 or more years experience); others are lay leaders, chaplains, parish nurses, education coordinators, or Stephen Ministers

Respondents' Faith Communities

Other Christian	
Presbyterian	7.8%
Baptist	6.4%
Lutheran	4.1%
Episcopalian/Anglican	3.9%
Various Other Christian Denominations	3.7%
Catholic	1.9%
Christian Church/Disciples of Christ	1.5%
Congregational/United Church of Christ	1.4%
Pentecostal/Charismatic	0.4%
Seventh Day Adventist	0.2%
Latter-day Saints/Mormon	0.1%
Churches of Christ	0.1%



Non- Christian	
Judaism	0.7%
Interfaith	0.6%
Metaphysical	0.2%
Buddhism	0.1%

Consistent with the convenience sample that received the survey, 98.2% of respondents are Christian, primarily Methodist/Wesleyan

Survey Distribution

Distributed via e-mail to a convenience sample of faith community leaders who completed the survey online.

- Project Compassion
 - Clergy mailing list
 - Informal network of faith community leaders in Chicago who work with Project Compassion
- The Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life
 - Chaplains at a Detroit hospital working with the institute forwarded to local faith community leaders
 - Participants in an institute-led conference
- Duke Divinity School
 - Continuing education participants
 - Faculty, staff, and students
- State hospice organization for NC and SC
 - Forwarded to member hospices who forwarded to local faith community leaders
- Sent to the following with a request to forward:
 - Episcopal Church of NC
 - Texas Congregations
 - United Church of Christ Cleveland
 - VA Lutherans
 - Aging with Dignity
 - National Faith in Action Network
 - Parish Nurse Network
 - The Center for Practical Bioethics
 - Wake Forest Divinity School