

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF DEATH ANXIETY AND THE COMPLETION OF
ADVANCE DIRECTIVES FOR ONCOLOGY SOCIAL WORKERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which the death anxiety of oncology social workers impacts the facilitation of the completion of their personal advance directives, and communication about advance directives with patients. Members of the Association of Oncology Social Work completed death anxiety and advance directive communication practices survey instruments. Terror Management Theory and Personal Construct Theory guided the examination of the results. Respondents having more years of work experience reported higher death anxiety scores. And, as the death anxiety scores increased the communication scores decreased related to disclosure of information about advance directives and values in living. In spite of limitations, the study findings contribute to the furthering of understanding oncology social workers in this context. The combined use of Terror Management Theory and Personal Construct Theory has seldom been used to study oncology social workers and the statistically significant findings suggest future research may be warranted.