Recognising Dying Toolkit

end-of-life ESSENTIALS®
education for acute hospitals

CHECKLIST

☐ Think about all the patients in your care today. Ask yourself the 'surprise' question about each patient: Would you be surprised if this patient dies within the next few months/weeks/days?[1] Is it time to initiate a conversation about end-of-life care? How do you raise this within your team?

☐ Recognise the next time a patient uses one of the end-of-life triggers. If the patient wishes, start a conversation about their concerns and preferences. Use active listening and empathy, but be honest. Do not provide false hope and don't shy away from using the word 'dying. Make sure patients' preferences are recorded and shared with other team members.

☐ Use the SPICT (Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators Tool)[2] to identify patients at risk of deteriorating and dying: https://www.spict.org.uk/

☐ Check your patient is still happy with their care plan. Let them know they can revisit this. A trigger for this might be the patient raising questions about an aspect of their care, a deterioration in their condition, new symptoms, or when they transition to the terminal phase.

☐ The Northern Adelaide Local Health Network have 'An example care plan for the Last Days of Life' Do you have a similar plan? Consider discussing this among the team. https://www.endoflifeessentials.com.au/Portals/14/document/education/EOLC_plan_2016.pdf

HELPFUL LINKS

- The National Consensus Statement: Essential elements for safe and high-quality end-of-life care
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care: End-of-Life Care
- Indigenous Program of Experience in Palliative Approach (IPEPA): Cultural Considerations, providing end-of-life care for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples

VIDEOS, BLOGS, and PODCASTS

- End-of-Life Essentials. 2025. Recognising Dying in Hospitals Webinar
- TED. 2011. A TED Talk by Peter Saul: Let's talk about Dying
- Palliative Care Victoria, Associate Professor Brian Le, Communication at the end of life

FURTHER READING

- Bloomer MJ, Ranse K, Butler A, Brooks L. A national Position Statement on adult end-of-life care in critical care. Aust Crit Care. 2022;35(4):480-487. doi:10.1016/j.aucc.2021.06.006
- Marck CH, Weil J, Lane H, et al. Care of the dying cancer patient in the emergency department: findings from a National survey of Australian emergency department clinicians. Intern Med J. 2014;44(4):362-368. doi:10.1111/imj.12379
- Mitchell I, Lacey J, Anstey M, et al. Understanding end-of-life care in Australian hospitals. Aust Health Rev. 2021;45:540-547. doi:10.1071/AH20223

References
1. Thomas K, Stobbart-Rowlands M. Gold standards framework annual meeting. Improving end of life care using gold standards framework. BMJ Support Palliat Care [Internet]. 2011;1(1). Available from: https://www.goldstandardsframework.org.uk
2. The University of Edinburgh. Supportive and palliative care indicators tool (SPICT) [Internet]. 2016. Available from: https://www.spict.org.uk/

Flinders University