

Plain text version of poster: **More than the last breath: the spectrum of palliative care**

Poster incorporates hand drawn text and images to visualising the following:

### **More than the last breath: the spectrum of palliative care**

Focusing on the holistic needs and life quality and shared with patient and family

Care includes social, spiritual, emotional and physical needs

Living with life limiting condition (including advanced frailty plus or minus dementia)

- Check we know “what matters to me”
- Start anticipatory care planning with ReSPECT or similar tool
- Are prescribed drugs still needed?
- Stop unnecessary or harmful medication
- Is patient and family aware focus is on good palliative care?
- Consider resuscitation status
- Is Power of Attorney in place and documented?

Period of decline and indicators of decline\*

Can be hours, days, months or years

- Decreasing activity mobility and function
- Increasing need for care support
- Adverse event e.g. fall or hospital admission
- Increasing symptoms or complications of underlying illness
- Decreasing oral intake and weight loss

\*Gold Standards Framework 2011

- Medical nursing review to look for reversible causes of decline
- Review ACP with patient and family
- Choice of no further active treatment
- Request just in case medication
- Liaise with GP/District Nurse
- Medicines better crushed where allowed or in other form
- Resuscitation form discussed and complete

Last days or hours

- Unnecessary medication stopped
- Just in case medicines in place
- Finally supported and updated
- GP/District Nurse courtesy call
- DNACPR in place?
- Anticipatory care plan wishes accounted for?

Recognise possible signs of active dying (LAST BREATH)

- Lethargy: weak, bedbound, increasingly sleepy

- Altered mental state: confused, restless, agitated
- Skin changes: pale, blue, mottled, cold hands or feet
- Tablets and oral intake: diminished or stopped
- Breathing changes: rattly, rapid, intermittent

Resources:

<https://www.resus.org.uk/respect>

<https://www.palliativecareguidelines.scot.nhs.uk>

<https://nhsforthvalley.com/palliative-care-poster>

NHS Forth Valley

February 2023