

## Phase Definitions

The palliative care phase identifies a clinically meaningful period in a patient's condition. The palliative care phase is determined by a holistic clinical assessment which considers the needs of the patients and their family and carers.	
<b>START</b>	<b>END</b>
<b>Stable</b>	
<p>Patient problems and symptoms are adequately controlled by established plan of care <b>and</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further interventions to maintain symptom control and quality of life have been planned <b>and</b></li> <li>Family/carer situation is relatively stable and no new issues are apparent.</li> </ul>	<p>The needs of the patient and / or family/carer increase, requiring changes to the existing plan of care.</p>
<b>Unstable</b>	
<p>An urgent change in the plan of care or emergency treatment is required <b>because</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patient experiences a new problem that was not anticipated in the existing plan of care, <b>and/or</b></li> <li>Patient experiences a rapid increase in the severity of a current problem; <b>and/or</b></li> <li>Family/ carers circumstances change suddenly impacting on patient care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new plan of care is in place, it has been reviewed and no further changes to the care plan are required. This does not necessarily mean that the symptom/crisis has fully resolved but there is a clear diagnosis and plan of care (i.e. patient is stable or deteriorating) <b>and/or</b></li> <li>Death is likely within days (i.e. patient is now terminal).</li> </ul>
<b>Deteriorating</b>	
<p>The care plan is addressing anticipated needs but requires periodic review <b>because</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patients overall functional status is declining <b>and/or</b></li> <li>Patient experiences a gradual worsening of existing problem <b>and/or</b></li> <li>Patient experiences a new but anticipated problem <b>and/or</b></li> <li>Family/carers experience gradual worsening distress that impacts on the patient care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patient condition plateaus (i.e. patient is now stable) <b>or</b></li> <li>An urgent change in the care plan or emergency treatment <b>and/or</b></li> <li>Family/ carers experience a sudden change in their situation that impacts on patient care, and urgent intervention is required (ie patient is now unstable) <b>or</b></li> <li>Death is likely within days (i.e. patient is now terminal).</li> </ul>
<b>Terminal</b>	
<p>Death is likely within days.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patient dies <b>or</b></li> <li>Patient condition changes and death is no longer likely within days (i.e. patient is now stable or deteriorating).</li> </ul>
<b>Bereavement – post death support</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The patient has died</li> <li>Bereavement support provided to family/carers is documented in the deceased patient's clinical record.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case closure</li> </ul> <p>Note: If counselling is provided to a family member or carer, they become a client in their own right.</p>

M. Masso, S. Frederic, Allingham, M. Banfield, C. Elizabeth. Johnson, T. Pidgeon, P. Yates & K. Eagar, "Palliative care phase: inter-rater reliability and acceptability in a national study", Palliative Medicine 29 1 (2015) 22-30.

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