

End of life Care



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INTRODUCTION

The goal of end of life care is a dignified and decent death for the dying patient. The diagnosis of dying - i.e. recognising those patients who may be entering, or close to entering, the advanced and final stages of illness, is the first step towards this goal.

Following on from that diagnosis, there are key interventions which can help the patient, their family, their carers and the healthcare team achieve a 'good death'.

There may be difficult conversations, and there are processes and associated paperwork to follow.

The aims of this module are:

- To understand the importance of diagnosing 'dying' in the context of end of life care.
- To recognize the symptoms/signs and triggers for doing this.
- To understand how the proactive use of anticipatory care planning supports end of life care.
- To appreciate the need for 'difficult conversations' and to suggest strategies to assist with these conversations.

This module is about the concepts and principles of end of life care. It deals with the supportive processes, and paperwork, which help to achieve a dignified and decent death. These include:

- the supportive and palliative care indicators tool (SPICT)
- anticipatory care planning (ACP)
- the Scottish DNACPR framework
- gold standards framework (GSF)
- key information summary (KIS)
- just in case prescribing
- registered nurse verification of expected death
- end of life care planning

It does not deal with symptom control, nor any other medical aspects of palliative care.