

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.	
START	END
Stable	
<p>Patient problems and symptoms are adequately controlled by established plan of care and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further interventions to maintain symptom control and quality of life have been planned and Family/carer situation is relatively stable and no new issues are apparent. 	<p>The needs of the patient and / or family/carer increase, requiring changes to the existing plan of care.</p>
Unstable	
<p>An urgent change in the plan of care or emergency treatment is required because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patient experiences a new problem that was not anticipated in the existing plan of care, and/or Patient experiences a rapid increase in the severity of a current problem; and/or Family/ carers circumstances change suddenly impacting on patient care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) and/or Death is likely within days (i.e. patient is now terminal).
Deteriorating	
<p>The care plan is addressing anticipated needs but requires periodic review because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patients overall functional status is declining and/or Patient experiences a gradual worsening of existing problem and/or Patient experiences a new but anticipated problem and/or Family/carers experience gradual worsening distress that impacts on the patient care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patient condition plateaus (i.e. patient is now stable) or An urgent change in the care plan or emergency treatment and/or Family/ carers experience a sudden change in their situation that impacts on patient care, and urgent intervention is required (ie patient is now unstable) or Death is likely within days (i.e. patient is now terminal).
Terminal	
<p>Death is likely within days.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patient dies or Patient condition changes and death is no longer likely within days (i.e. patient is now stable or deteriorating).
Bereavement – post death support	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The patient has died Bereavement support provided to family/carers is documented in the deceased patient's clinical record. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case closure <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.