



Decision making at the End of Life

A learning and reflective practice session



Ruth Burey - RCN Professional Lead, Learning and Development

Reflection – 15 minutes

1. Think about, then write down an area of practice in End of Life Care that you are proud of, that you or your team does particularly well in caring for and supporting patients or clients at the end of life. Describe the evidence that assures you that this is good practice.
2. Write down a description of an area of practice in End of Life Care in your own setting that needs improvement.
3. Describe the actions you need to take to address the area of practice described above.

If you are undertaking this exercise with others, discuss 1-3 above and exchange good practice ideas.



Film clip – 10 minute exercise

1. Watch and listen to the



Unwanted consequences

Please click the link:

[Ain't the way to Die](#)



Discussion about the film clip – 5 minutes

If you are undertaking this exercise with others, take a few moments to discuss and exchange your thoughts about the film clip.



Clinical scenario – 20 minute exercise

Exploring challenges in practice

1. Carefully read through the case scenario on the next slide
2. Read through and discuss with colleagues the key questions on slide 9, in relation to the case scenario
- 3.



Case scenario

- James, a registered nurse is working at night in a care home for older people. During his rounds, James approaches Mr Brown, a patient in bed who is clearly deceased. Mr Brown is 92 and has advanced dementia. He is frail, bed bound and has a number of chronic medical problems. Mr Brown has been at the care home for a number of months.
- James observes that Mr Brown has clearly been deceased for some time. James is competent in verification of death and makes a clinical assessment. He does not initiate cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as, in his professional judgement / assessment this would be futile.
- There are no do not resuscitate orders in place for Mr Brown. There is no evidence of an end of life care discussion or care plan in Mr Brown's records. In a timely manner, James informs the care home manager / nurse lead as well as Mr Brown's relatives and the police of Mr Brown's death.
- Mr Brown's relatives are supportive of nurse James's decision making and rationale. They are relieved that Mr Brown was able to pass away with dignity and are grateful to James. The police are satisfied that there is no follow up necessary by them.



Key questions

1. As the nurse leader or manager of the care home in which this incident takes place, what concerns are raised for you in this scenario?
2. Outline your accountability and responsibilities in this scenario to:
 - Mr Brown and his family
 - Other patients and relatives in your care
 - James, your nursing staff, the multidisciplinary team
 - Those to whom you directly report
 - Regulatory bodies
 - Others
3. How might your future practice change as a result of your learning from this incident?



References and resources to inform your responses to the key questions on slide 9

1. RCN/BMA Joint statement on CPR: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/news/joint-statement-on-cpr>
2. NMC/RCN joint statement on decisions relating to CPR: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/news-and-updates/joint-nmc-rcn-statement->



Written reflective account – 10 minutes

Use the NMC reflective practice template to record and reflect on your learning, including how it will inform your future practice.

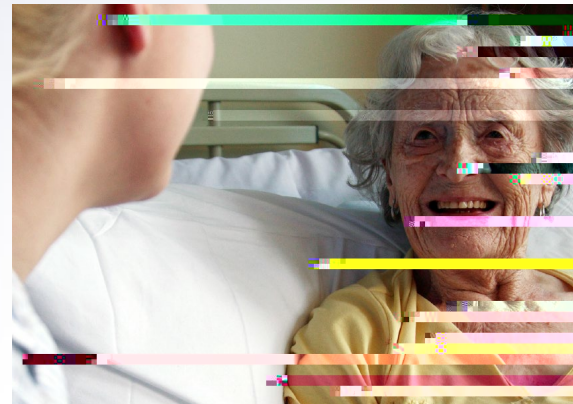
See:

<http://revalidation.nmc.org.uk/what-you-need-to>



You have now completed this learning session

Please see the additional resources to support your practice on the next slide.



Additional useful resources pt. 1

RCN End of Life Care resources page:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/end-of-life-care>

RCN Pain and Palliative Care Forum:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/forums/pain-and-palliative-care-forum>

RCN Care Homes subject guide:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/library/subject-guides/care-homes-subject-guide> (includes links to the RCN *Care Home Journey* resource and the Older People's Forum)

RCN Principles of Nursing Practice:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/nutrition-and-hydration/principles-of-nursing-practice>



Additional useful resources pt. 2

RCN Advanced Care Planning tools:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/end-of-life-care/advance-care-planning>

RCN 'Fundamentals of care at the end of life' resource:

<http://rcnendoflife.org.uk/>

Macmillan - Advanced care planning in Scotland, England, Wales & Northern Ireland:

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/organising/planning-for-the-future-with-advanced-cancer/advance-care-planning-ni>

Northern Ireland Direct – End of Life Care & Palliative

Care: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/end-life-care-and-palliative-care#toc-1>

