



Tips for Careworkers: After-Death Choices

What it is: Care of an older person and their family does not end when the person dies. There are arrangements that need to be made in line with their wishes.

Why it matters: The person may have written down their wishes in an Advance Care Directive (ACD) but some decisions may need to be taken by members of the family. Planning can assist the family with their grief and bereavement. Support from careworkers can also help.

What I need to know: The Registered Nurse (RN)/supervisor needs to speak with all relevant people and make sure all special needs at the time of death are attended to.

Families may wish to spend time with the person's body.

An authorised person needs to make sure the person is dead, and a document signed to officially confirm the death. After this, a funeral company can take the body into their care.

There may be requirements for reporting a death to the coroner. Relevant legal requirements are not the same across Australia.

Do Respect and support the family members who may:

- need time to accept the death
- need time to travel to the site of death
- want to sit with the deceased.

Do Report to nursing/supervisory staff any needs including religious and cultural practices that may be important for the family.

Do Know your organisation's policy about when and what to tell others following the death of an older person in your care.

Note It is important to have a plan in place, because if an authorised person is not available to verify a death, then the police need to be called and the coroner involved.

Name:

My reflections:

When a person dies, who should speak with relevant people and take control?

Staff working in aged care look after many people who die. What can I do for my own self-care?

My notes:

See related palliAGED Practice
Tip Sheets:
Advance Care Planning
End-of-Life Care Pathways
Grief and Loss among Older People,
Families and Residents

For references and the latest version of all Tip Sheets visit
palliated.com.au/Practice-Centre/For-Careworkers