

Compassionate care door signs

Implementation guide

Supporting compassionate care of people who are hospitalised in the last days of life

Compassion shown by hospital staff can have an enormous impact on a patient's experience of care. One way we can show compassion is with use of the **compassionate care door sign**.

The sign is placed on the hospital room door of a person who is imminently dying. It discreetly signifies to hospital staff that the person is dying, ensuring only essential staff enter the room and are sensitive to the needs of the person and their family. This helps to maintain a private and respectful environment.

There are two signs available. One is suitable for use with all patients and the other for use with people who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.



Implementing compassionate care door signs in your clinical area

Printing

- Print the door signs on A4 paper
- Laminate the signs so they can be wiped clean
- It can help to have a small number of laminated signs ready for when a suitable person is identified
- Consider how you will attach the signs to the person's door or curtain – with Blu Tack, a bulldog clip or reusable hook. Keep these supplies with the laminated signs

Education and training

- Ensure all disciplines (medical, nursing, allied health, admin, operational) are included in your education plan. Success requires that all staff in your clinical area are aware of the sign and what it signifies
- Use a multimodal approach to educate staff such as in-services, staff meetings, emails, posters

Use of the door sign

- The sign may be used when a person is imminently dying. This may include someone who has commenced on a [Care Plan for the Dying Person](#) or [Care Plan for the Dying Child](#)
- Explain the purpose of the door sign to the person and their family. If there are any concerns about its use the wishes of the family should be respected. The family may wish for their loved one's name to be written on the sign – but this is a personal choice
- Inform staff that the sign has been placed on the person's door
- On seeing the door sign, staff should take care to maintain a respectful environment. Be conscious of noise outside the room. Before entering the room, take a compassionate pause, reflect, consider the necessity of entering, and be sensitive to the needs of the person and their family



This material is based upon an [initiative of Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service](#)

It has been modified to become a statewide resource in consultation with consumers and clinicians from across Queensland