Quality Palliative Care in Long Term Care A Community-University Research Alliance

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Please copy and share this document. We would appreciate you referencing the source of this work as:

Sympathy Card Process, Quality Palliative Care in Long Term Care, Version 1, www.palliativealliance.ca.

SYMPATHY CARDS

Purpose:

A sympathy card supports communication by:

- allowing staff to express words of condolence and sympathy to the family of a resident after he/she has died.
- communicating to family members that the staff of the home acknowledge and empathize with the loss that has occurred
- providing comfort to family as they go through a time of grief and loss.
- providing an opportunity for closure for staff by allowing them to communicate what the resident meant to them
- There is a pride in the cards as the design/poem was chosen by the staff of a the home.

Process:

When a resident dies one of the resident's caregivers (PSW, RPN, RN), will acquire a sympathy card from the nursing station and prepare it for that resident's family.

Within the next shift or two, the caregiver will place the sympathy card with the residents name clipped on it in an appropriate place where the card will be visible to staff such as a nursing station or staff room. The caregiver will proceed to follow up on the card within 1 week to make sure everyone that wants to sign has done so. This caregiver will bring the card to other areas of the LTC home ie: life enrichment, physiotherapy and dietary, giving other staff the opportunity to sign. The card is addressed by the ward clerk and sent to families.





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