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

Communication Tip:
Utilizing a
Butterfly indicator

Utilizing a Butterfly Indicator is a method of communicating a resident's death to staff, volunteers, residents, and family members. Consider the following techniques in your home:
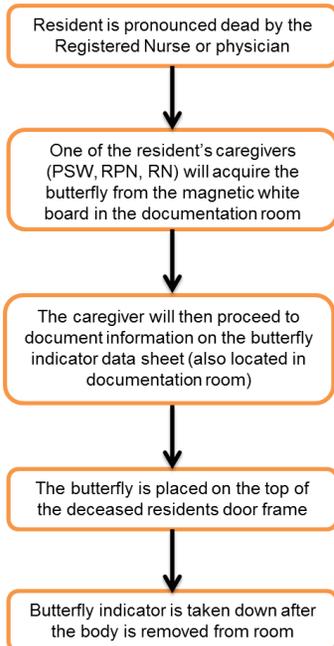
- placing the butterfly on the door of a deceased resident can prepare staff and volunteers prior to entering the room

- putting a butterfly on the resident's chart can help nursing staff identify who has a palliative or end-of-life care plan

- palliative care team members can identify themselves by placing a butterfly indicator (ie pin) on their uniform

- encouraging palliative care team members to have a butterfly beside their name on the shift rotation boards allows for staff, residents, and families to easily identify who is on the palliative care resource team

- Placing a butterfly at the place setting in the dining room of a resident who has died communicates that resident's death to other residents and families
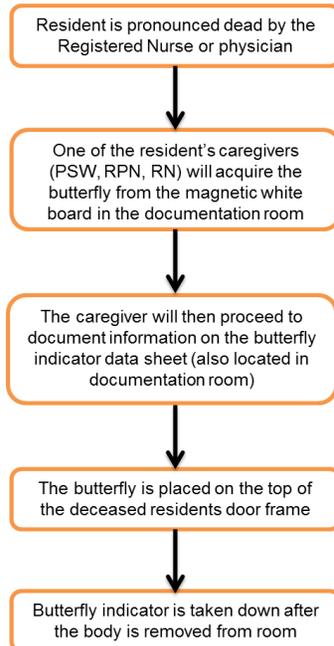
www.palliativealliance.ca

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

Purpose
A butterfly indicator is a subtle way to alert staff prior to entering a resident's room that a death has occurred. It is an immediate action that can provides notification to staff in the event of a death as not all departments can be informed at the time.

Process

Resident is pronounced dead by the Registered Nurse or physician

↓

One of the resident's caregivers (PSW, RPN, RN) will acquire the butterfly from the magnetic white board in the documentation room

↓

The caregiver will then proceed to document information on the butterfly indicator data sheet (also located in documentation room)

↓

The butterfly is placed on the top of the deceased residents door frame

↓

Butterfly indicator is taken down after the body is removed from room

www.palliativealliance.ca