

TIPS FOR USING The Care Plan: A Path to Comfort for the Hospice Patient

Thank you for choosing our booklet. Having used the booklet ourselves and receiving feedback from customers we have compiled some tips that will help you get the most out of the booklet.

1. **Include the booklet in your admission packet.** The admitting staff member begins filling in the information on the **contact list**, with the family member or patient. As members of the hospice team arrive they also fill out their information. This encourages the family, careteam, and hospice to consistently use the booklet as the central source of information and instructions, which keeps everyone on the same page. This is a good time to create the expectation of having the booklet out at the start of every visit.
2. **Point out the Introduction** with focus on the What You Need to Know section. This sets the stage for the full benefit of the booklet and brings direct attention to the available videos.
3. **About the Dying Body** is the core of the booklet that leads into the hands on symptom and medication management. **Consider reading that section** directly to or with the family and patient. We have found reading line by line has a larger impact and the family and patient are more likely to return to it independently.
4. **The RN fills out the routine medications and the PRNs** on the first visit and reviews the medication management pages.. This is a good time to suggest using the PRN medication and bowel tracking form. Placing the booklet in the location used for medication management keeps everything in one place for easy referral.
5. Expecting the patient and family to read the booklet independently often doesn't happen. **Consider introducing 1-2 sections at a time** that are currently pertinent to care and symptom management. Reading it with them helps build trust and increases a depth of understanding, and they will be more likely to follow your personal individualized instructions. Using a sticky note to mark the pertinent page/s is often helpful.
6. **Asking them to read a section before the next visit**, as homework, is a gentle way to plant the seed for what is coming. As hospice professionals, we know what is coming, but families can often be blindsided. Encourage them to think about (and write down) questions that arise. For example - when you see transition coming...
7. Once patients, families and caregivers become friendly with the booklet, they will independently go to the booklet to search for answers. Learning on their time and in their own way empowers them and decreases triage and after-hour calls.
8. Requiring the hospice team to incorporate the booklet into the care plan not only helps to meet medicare guidelines and improves CAHPS scores, it assures consistent use by the team. Once they feel the effects of the more informed patients, families, and caregivers they too fully embrace the booklet.

We welcome your input as you use A PATH TO COMFORT with your hospice clients.

Benda and Nancy

