
Nearing Death Awareness

What is nearing death awareness?

- A special knowledge about the process of dying that some patients experience
- The attempt of dying people to describe what they are experiencing
- It may be an attempt to request something the person needs for a peaceful death

What are some signs of nearing death awareness?

- Appearance of confusion
- Seeing and/or speaking to those already dead or spiritual beings
- Talking about seeing other places of light, peace, or beauty
- Using symbolic language – talk of journeys, luggage, standing in line, going home
- May begin to ask for people with whom they need closure

What do you need to do?

- Report this to the interdisciplinary team
- Listen carefully to the person and affirm their communication
- Ask gentle questions if the person is expressing a need
- Involve the family in this experience and support them – assure them that this is not confusion but is a significant change in condition

Other HPNA Teaching Sheets on are available at www.HPNA.org.

Reference

Core Curriculum for the Generalist Hospice and Palliative Nurse. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company; 2011.

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