End of Life Care Resources Used at Nenagh Hospital

**Ward Altar**

The oak altar is used in the hospital when a patient is dying or following their death. The top of the altar features the end of life spiral. Religious and cultural items relevant to end of life care are stored inside.

**Handover bag**

We use a high-quality family handover bag to promote a dignified and sensitive way of returning the deceased patient’s personal belongings to the family. We no longer use plastic bags.

**Mortuary Trolley Drape**

A purple drape is placed over our mortuary trolleys when transporting the body of a deceased person through the hospital.

**Sympathy Cards**

In recent years our practice at Nenagh Hospital is to send a sympathy card to the next-of-kin of those who have died in the hospital. The sympathy card is handwritten by a person who was involved in the care of the patient.

Remembrance Mass

A Special Mass is held in St. John’s Church annually to celebrate the memory of all patients who died in the UHL Hospital Nenagh Hospital in the previous year. Families of the deceased are invited. A candle is memory of the deceased is lit during the service.

A remembrance tree bearing the names of the people who died in Nenagh Hospital in the previous year is on display. Refreshments are served after the Mass. Silveryourn Child participates in the Mass.

Feedback from the remembrance mass:

"Thank you for organising the remembrance service - I found it very healing. The staff at Nenagh Hospital have certainly helped me through this difficult time".

Think Ahead Information Evenign

(UHL Nenagh Hospital - April 2015)

**Think Ahead - Planning for Death & Dying**

It is the wish of most of us to be able to die peacefully, conscious and capable of communicating with our loved ones to the very end. Unfortunately, death does not always occur in this way.

Thinking about dying is challenging, and talking meaningfully with those who are close to us about matters such as serious illness, dying and death can be difficult. Think Ahead is a tool to help you start this process at an early stage, beginning with helping you to understand the value of different aspects of yourself and the person you are creating the end of life plan for. The symbol is inspired by ancient Irish history and is not associated with any one religion or denomination.

- The 3-stranded white spiral represents the interconnected cycle of life – birth, life and death.
- The oak ward altar is used in this hospital when a patient is dying or following their death. The top of the altar features the end of life spiral. Religious and cultural items relevant to end of life care are stored inside.

**Family Room University Hospital Nenagh**

University Hospital Nenagh is committed to improving end of life care to our patients and their families. One initiative taken by the End-of-Life Care Committee at University Hospital Nenagh was to develop a family room for relatives who had patients in our hospital nearing the end of their life and for relatives who were bereaved. Previously, we had no such facility at our hospital. One area we were to create a space that was private and tranquil allowing relatives to see this facility in the moments of sadness and grief and stay both day and night if they wished while their loved one is dying in our hospital.

With support from the Irish Hospice Foundation – Design and Dignity Grant Scheme we now have a family room located in the front hall near reception which provides a calm, peaceful private environment which hospital will keep the stone and lockbox and make the indelible as full as possible. We are very pleased to have this Family room as an exemplar project for all hospitals in our region.

**Final Journeys**

Improving how we care for people at end of life.

During the critical times of bad news, dying, deaths and bereavement, the quality of interactions between end of life patients, their families and hospital staff has a very real impact on all concerned. Many studies have also shown that hospital staff experience stress and are less effectively supporting patients and families at these difficult and emotional times because of a lack of adequate training.

Final Journeys is a development initiative targeted at addressing some of these issues with the wider hospital staff group. The purpose of Final Journeys is to improve end of life care through promoting a culture of awareness and personal empowerment among all hospital staff, and to support the development of good communication skills in those hospital staff that have direct contact with patients at the end of life, and their families.

To date, over 70 staff (all staff grades) at Nenagh Hospital have attended this training day.

Some feedback comments from attendees of Final Journeys:

"Excellent day - Excellent course, great speakers, great documentation, very informative and educational. Great mix of staff!" 

"The course really met my expectations and needs.

"From now on I’m going to take time in actively listen and I’m more aware that End of Life care affects everyone working in a hospital."

"Excellent course. It should be made compulsory for all hospital staff!"