The End of Life Symbol

Usage and Style Guidelines

Version 1.0

NETWORK of HospiceFriendly HOSPITALS
The End-of-Life Symbol *Usage and Style Guidelines*

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Background

This symbol has been developed by the Hospice Friendly Hospitals Programme (HFH) to respectfully identify items connected with the end of life. The symbol is inspired by ancient Irish history and is not associated with any one religion or denomination.

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The spiral can be explained as follows:

• The 3-stranded white spiral represents the interconnected cycle of life – birth, life and death.

• The white outer circle represents continuity, infinity and completion.

• Purple was chosen as the background colour as it is associated with nobility, solemnity and spirituality.
Background

In conjunction with good practice in hospitals and care facilities, the spiral symbol aims to add respect and solemnity to items used prior to or following the death of a person and to make resources relating to the end of life instantly identifiable.

It communicates to staff and visitors that a patient is imminently dying or has died. Awareness of this profound event allows staff to interact appropriately with those affected by the death.

On seeing the symbol, people should create an atmosphere of quiet where people are respectful, avoid mobile phone use and be prepared to meet people who are grieving.
How to use the spiral symbol

When using the spiral symbol, it is important not to diminish the impact of its presence or to use the symbol as a substitute for sensitive and honest communication. The guidelines on the following pages may help healthcare organisations to decide on its appropriate use.

Where to use the spiral symbol

• The spiral symbol is best displayed at ward or unit level. It can be placed at the nurses’ station or at the entrance to the ward.

• It can also be displayed on a single room which faces a corridor, having first advised the family. Caution should be exercised if displaying the symbol on the door of a single room or anywhere where it can be directly attributed to an individual patient.
When to use the spiral symbol

• The symbol should normally be displayed when a person has died. It can also be displayed when the death of a person is imminent. However as the use of the symbol may vary from one area to another, it should be used with caution to avoid any misunderstanding amongst staff or between staff & relatives.

• It is advisable to explain the purpose of the symbol to the family and its value in creating an atmosphere of quiet and respect. In the event the display of the symbol is a matter of concern, the wishes of the family should be respected.

• It is important to ensure the symbol is not on display at any other time in clinical care-areas.
When to use the spiral symbol continued

- The spiral is also used on resources directly associated with end of life such as sympathy cards, mortuary trolley drapes, bed drapes, ward altars, family handover bags, resource folders for end-of-life care, information leaflets or stained glass windows in mortuary/end of life room.

- When the symbol is used for the purpose of raising awareness and displaying resources it should be accompanied by a brief description of its meaning. In such situations the HFH logo should be displayed more prominently.
When to use the spiral symbol

The spiral symbol must **not** be used for the following:

- In advertising
- In promotional work
- In event signage
- As part of a hospital or service name
- In any manner that implies HFH endorsement, certification, sponsorship or approval of a third-party product or service.
The HFH Network Logo

- The spiral symbol is **not** the logo of Hospice Friendly Hospitals. Communication, such as:

  Memos, letters and emails, relating to Hospice Friendly Hospitals should display the HFH logo **only**.
Maintaining visual consistency

The spiral symbol affords a means of promoting the values of a high quality end-of-life care programme and such a valuable asset must be protected through proper and consistent usage.

Usage outside of these guidelines will damage the important progress that has been made arising from its introduction.
Maintaining visual consistency

Size and Proportions

The symbol does not reproduce well below a certain size. Avoid using it in applications where the diameter of the circle is less than 15mm.

If using the symbol at a size smaller than this is unavoidable ensure that a reasonable margin around the symbol is used.

The symbol should always be used with one spiral arm pointing up. Do not rotate the symbol in any application.

The symbol should be allowed ‘room to breathe’. This can be achieved by allowing a suitable margin of space around the symbol, using the proportions indicated here as a guide.
Maintaining visual consistency

*Colour References*

The symbol should generally appear as white on a purple ground.

Color Reference
Pantone 2597

The symbol may also appear in purple on a white ground.
Maintaining visual consistency

*Colour - Inappropriate use*
The End of Life Spiral Symbol may be downloaded in various formats by visiting www.hospicefriendlyhospitals.net

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