

# Supporting Families around the Resuscitation of an Adult Family Member

## Supporting Families

Identify a member of staff dedicated to supporting and communicating with the family

Explain that their relative has deteriorated and that resuscitation is ongoing

Avoid the use of medical terminology

Be honest rather than overly optimistic

## Family Witnessed Resuscitation

This has potential benefits for the patient and family and has not been shown to adversely affect clinical care

Offer families the opportunity to be present, if clinically appropriate

If possible encourage them to sit close enough to touch and talk to the patient

Provide explanations about what the team are doing

## Breaking Bad News

Establish what the family already know

Clearly and without using euphemisms inform them of the death

Provide information about what happens next and a point of contact

If the Police and Procurator Fiscal need to be involved, certain restrictions on what happens after a death may be necessary

## Talking about Patient Wishes

It may be appropriate to ask the family if they know of any pre-expressed wishes in the event of a sudden collapse

Check for written documentation such as an Anticipatory Care Plan

Be clear that you are not asking the family to make decisions about ongoing care

## If resuscitation is not successful

Talk to families about the intention to stop resuscitation while CPR is ongoing

Support them to maintain touch and talk to the patient while CPR stops

After a death, support families to spend time with their relative



## After Resuscitation

The resuscitation and death of a patient is stressful for all staff

Make time for a team debrief, ensuring that no-one focuses on feelings of blame

Look after yourself and your team

Please visit [www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk) to watch a short animated film on this topic and for other educational resources on death, dying and bereavement for health and social care professionals



[www.sad.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk)



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