COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL BENCHMARKING GROUP

End of Life Care in Critical Care

Aim: To provide guidance on end-of-life care in Critical Care patients

Scope: Patients in Critical Care who are at the end of life

DOCUMENT and REVIEW : RESPECT & DNACPR status on all patients

STANDARD CARE

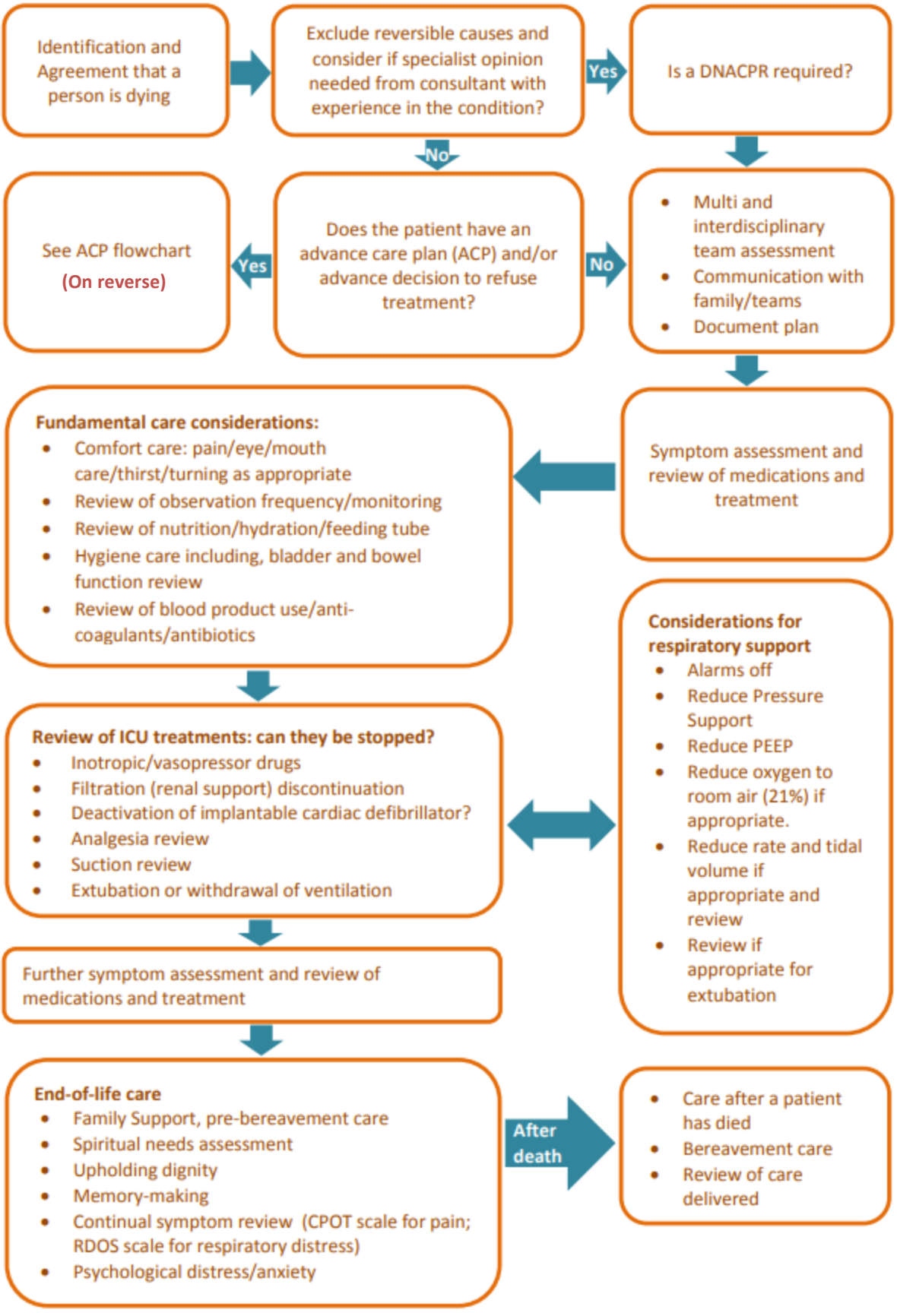
1	The move to end of life care should be discussed as a multi disciplinary team with involvement from the patient (where applicable) and family/next of kin (NOK)[1,3]
2	All discussions and preferences must be documented[1,3]
3	Review current medications and treatments (e.g. nutrition, hydration, ventilation[1,3]
4	Assess and manage end of life symptoms including pain, nausea, secretions, breathlessness, delirium and agitation[2,3]
5	Prescribe and administer anticipatory medication where appropriate[1]
6	Maintain comfort and dignity through individualised pain and symptom management, oral and eye care, thirst relief, repositioning, pressure area care and personal hygiene[3]
7	Refer to palliative care team if appropriate[1]
8	Offer the patient/family/NOK access to chaplaincy for religious, spiritual and emotional support[1,2,3]
9	Consider organ donation and referral to Specialist Organ Donation Nurse where appropriate[1,2,4]
10	Care after death: Offer the family/NOK keepsakes and/or memory items and bereavement support[3]
11	Complete care after death documentation/checklist as per trust policy[2,3]

	References
1	Intensive Care Society (ICS), Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine (FICM) Joint Standards Committee (2026) Guidelines for the Provision of Intensive Care Services (GPICS) V3
2	Critical Care Manual of Clinical Nursing Procedures (second edition) 2025 pp 620 - 639
3	FICM (2019) CARE AT THE END OF LIFE: A guide to best practice, discussion and decision-making in and around critical care
4	NICE (2019) (NG142) End of life care for adults: service delivery NICE (2016) (NG31) Care of dying adults in the last days of life

Please see your units full guidelines for more information

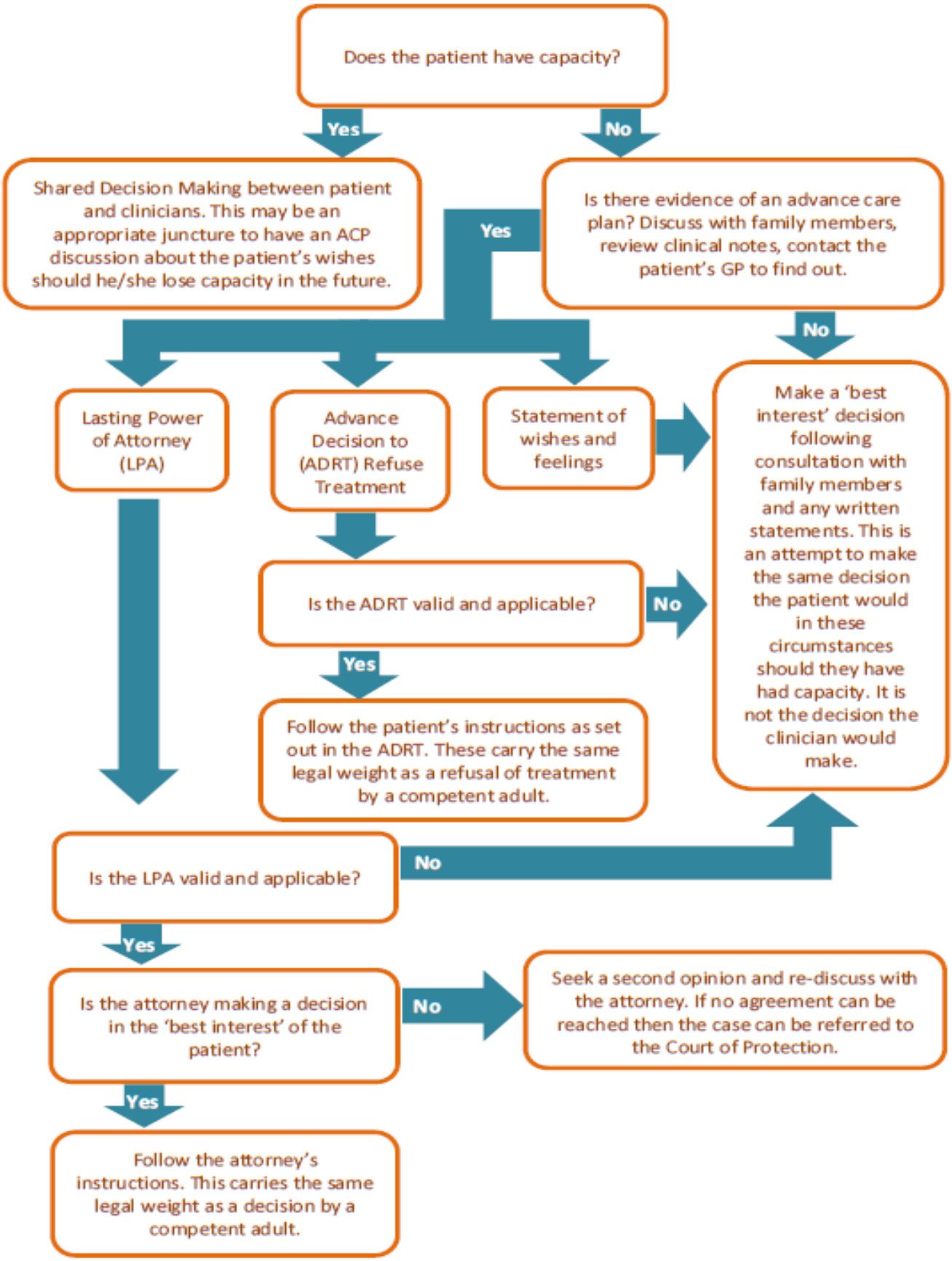
V1 2026

Aide memoire for end-of-life care on the critical care unit



Taken from Care at the End of Life: A guide to best practice, discussion and decision-making in and around critical care. FICM Sept 2019.

Aide memoire for assessing and responding to a patient's Advance Care Plan



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