Heart Failure Palliative Approach to Care (HeFPAC)
A GUIDE FOR NURSES

The HeFPAC provides key information relevant to the nursing care of patients with advanced (or end-stage) chronic heart failure (HF), including those with multiple chronic conditions (MCC). Use the HeFPAC:

- To inform HF-specific assessments & care
- To communicate with patients, their families and the health team about HF specific issues
- To integrate HF issues into collaborative care plans & goals of care discussions
- In conjunction with other assessment tools and clinical guidelines

A palliative approach refers to integrated and optimal symptom management and supportive care to reduce suffering and improve quality of life. It does not depend on a referral to a palliative care service or program.

What is Heart Failure?

- Heart Failure is a complex syndrome in which abnormal heart function results in or increases the subsequent risk of reduced cardiac output and/or pulmonary and systemic congestion.
- HF is a progressive, life-limiting chronic illness that reduces quality of life and exercise tolerance and is associated with high morbidity and mortality.
- HF can be classified according to the patient’s response to physical activity using the New York Heart Association (NYHA) Classification System. Patients with advanced HF are NYHA 3 or 4.
- HF symptoms can fluctuate on a daily basis, as HF progresses, previous symptom management may become ineffective, this will require a reassessment of the patient and approach to care.
- Optimal symptom control and comfort is possible even when HF is advanced or end-stage.

NYHA Functional Classification of HF

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No limitation of physical activity. All physical activity does not cause fatigue, palpitation or shortness of breath.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Slight limitation of physical activity. Can be used alone or combined with ICD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moderate limitation of physical activity. Can be used alone or combined with ICD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Severe limitation of physical activity.</td>
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