

# REMINDER

## HEALTH & SAFETY: PALLIATIVE CARE

### Description of Issue and Importance

Palliative care is the use of a variety of measures to relieve pain, suffering, and discomfort. Persons with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities often have difficulty in expressing pain and discomfort and consequently may not receive timely effective treatment.

### Recommended Action and Prevention Strategy

- Know how the person communicates pain and discomfort.
- Be alert for indicators of pain and discomfort:
  - Decreased activity
  - Restlessness
  - Tearfulness, crying
  - Moaning
  - Sighing
  - Grimacing or furrowed brow
  - Withdrawal from interaction with others
  - Labored breathing
  - Guarded or stiffened posture
  - Irritability
  - Increased behaviors or self injurious behaviors
  - Elevated blood pressure, pulse, and respirations
  - Anxiety
  - Fearfulness
  - Anger
  - Depression
  - Sleep Disturbances
  - Fatigue
  - Loss of appetite
  - Additional symptoms depending on the individual
- Monitor a person's pain level and trends. Communicate this information to supervisor and medical practitioners who can modify pain management strategies as indicated.
- Address a person's pain and discomfort promptly according to individualized plan.
- Use prescribed pain management methods and comfort measures: warm baths, positioning change, etc.

### Related Resources

Palliative Care series Fact Sheets: "General Considerations", "Pain Management", "Comfort Measures", "Adaptive Equipment"

### Outreach Services

[outreach@fssa.in.gov](mailto:outreach@fssa.in.gov) • [DDRSOutreach.IN.gov](http://DDRSOutreach.IN.gov)

For related reminders and resources, please visit [DDRSOutreach.IN.gov](http://DDRSOutreach.IN.gov).



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