



REMINDER

Palliative Care

Description of Issue and Importance

Palliative care is the use of a variety of measures to relieve pain, suffering, and discomfort. Individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) often have difficulty in expressing pain and discomfort and consequently may not receive timely effective treatment.

Recommended Action and Prevention Strategy

- Know how the individual communicates pain and discomfort.
- Be alert for indicators of pain and discomfort such as:
 - Decreased activity
 - Restlessness
 - Tearfulness, crying
 - Moaning
 - Sighing
 - Grimacing or frowning
 - Withdrawal from interaction with others
 - Labored breathing
 - Guarded or stiffened posture
 - Irritability
 - Increased negative or self-injurious behaviors
 - Raised blood pressure, pulse, and respirations
 - Anxiety
 - Fearfulness
 - Anger
 - Depression
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Fatigue
 - Loss of appetite
 - Additional symptoms depending on the individual

- Monitor the individual's pain level and trends. Give this information to supervisor and medical practitioners who can modify pain management strategies as indicated.
- Address a person's pain and discomfort quickly according to the individualized plan.
- Use prescribed pain management methods and comfort measures such as warm baths and positioning change.

Related Resources

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

References

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