

MANAGING DEPRESSION

What is Depression?

A range of feelings that may include sadness, gloom, numbness, emptiness, helplessness and hopelessness

Occurs frequently in chronic and terminal illnesses

Symptoms are often the same as those of illness

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Depression?

Fatigue

Sadness, depressed mood

Loss of appetite with weight loss

No interest or pleasure in daily activities

Withdrawal from family and friends

Sleep problems

Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, guilt

Difficulty focusing and thinking

Thoughts of death or suicide

Agitation or slowing down

What to report to the Hospice/Palliative Care Team?

Any of the above symptoms

A known history of depression

Any symptoms such as pain, nausea, difficulty breathing

Change in medications the team may be unaware of

What can be done for Depression?

Depression is common at the end-of-life. There is a wide range of intensity of depression. The team will help you sort out causes of depression. They will discuss treatment options with you. You may:

Optimize physical status with rest and nutrition

Set small, realistic, achievable goals

Utilize relaxation techniques

Consider complementary therapies such as aromatherapy, art and music therapy and your caregiver may

Keep the patient and area safe

Let you know that they will be there

Allow you to express feelings

Allow you to control as much as possible related to treatment decisions and activities

Other HPNA Patient / Family Teaching Sheets are available at www.hpna.org.

Reference

Core Curriculum for the Generalist Hospice and Palliative Nurse. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company; 2005.

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