

Managing Anxiety/Uneasy Feelings

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling or deep sense that things are not right. It is OK to experience anxiety sometimes. Anxiety can help people to focus on completing a task or to deal with a stressful situation. But it is not alright for people to have strong, extreme and lasting worry and fear about everyday life. People who have trouble with activities of daily living because of these feelings should ask for help to manage their anxiety.

What are the Symptoms of Anxiety?

- Fear
- Worry
- Sleeplessness, disturbing dreams or nightmares
- Confusion
- Rapid breathing
- Racing heartbeat
- Tension
- Shaking
- Inability to relax or get comfortable
- Sweating
- Problems paying attention or concentrating

What to Report to the Hospice/Palliative Care Team?

- Feelings that may be causing anxiety (like a fear of dying or worrying about money)
- Concerns about illness
- Relationship problems with family or friends
- Spiritual concerns
- Signs and symptoms that anxiety is changing or getting worse

What Can be Done to Help Relieve Anxiety?

The hospice/palliative care team will try to find the cause for your anxiety. They will talk with you and your primary care provider about treatment options.

Things you can do:

- Activities that have helped your anxiety in the past.
- Write down your thoughts and feelings.
- Treat physical problems, such as pain, that can cause anxiety.
- Try relaxing activities like deep breathing or yoga.
- Play soothing music.
- Keep your surroundings calm.
- Limit visitors.
- Massage your arms, back, hands or feet.
- Count backward slowly from 100 to 0.
- Avoid caffeine and alcoholic beverages.
- Exercise.
- Provide reassurance and support.
- Ask for help from family, friends and other members of your care team.
- Live life one minute at a time.
- Use ordered medications as prescribed.

Other HPNA Teaching Sheets are available at www.goHPNA.org.

References

Anxiety Disorders Association of America. *Tips to Manage Anxiety and Stress*. Available at <http://www.adaa.org/tips-manage-anxiety-and-stress>. Accessed October 10, 2015.

Berry P. *Core Curriculum for the Hospice and Palliative Registered Nurse*. 4th ed. Pittsburgh, PA: Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association; 2015.

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