**FAST FACTS: Non-Drug Treatment: Distraction**

Distraction is the process of drawing a person’s attention away from one thought, object, or experience and toward a different thought, object, or experience. Distraction may decrease the experience of pain because of a person’s ability to process only so much information at one time.

✓ **Benefits of Distraction:**
- Decreasing pain
- Increasing relaxation
- Providing an opportunity to spend enjoyable time with other people

✓ **Potential Problems with Distraction:**
- When distraction successfully relieves pain, some people may doubt the presence or severity of the pain.
- The individual may become even more aware of pain when the distraction ends.
- The individual must be ready for and interested in using distraction as a pain relief technique.

✓ **Methods of Distraction:**
- Watching TV or movies
- Petting an animal
- Playing games
- Listening to music
- Looking at pictures. Pictures may be used in the following way:
  - Fill a folder or box with pictures from magazines or calendars.
  - Keep the folder or box on hand and bring it out when your loved one needs something to do.
  - Have your loved one look at a picture and describe it in any way they choose.
  - As soon as your loved one loses interest, choose another picture.
- Use of Humor. Humor may be used in the following way:
  - Create a humor library; cut out favorite cartoons, sayings, jokes, or quotes and put them in an album or folder; bring it out when your loved one needs a distraction.
  - Watch portions of a funny movie.
  - Read sections of a funny book out loud.

✓ **What Else You Should Do**
- Write down and share information about your loved one’s pain with their healthcare provider.
- Use a Pain Diary to note important information useful to the healthcare provider.
- Encourage your loved one to try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on their pain in their Pain Diary.
References
