

Non-pharmacological Pain and Symptom Management

DISTRACTION

Distraction is a way to relieve pain by engaging the mind on something that is enjoyable other than the pain experience. When a person's mind is focusing on something other than pain, the pain may be more tolerable.

Benefits of distraction:

- Decreases pain
- Increases relaxation
- Provides an opportunity to spend enjoyable time with other people or pets

Potential problems with distraction:

- When distraction successfully relieves pain, some staff or family may doubt the presence or severity of the pain.
- Older adult may become even more aware of pain when distraction ends.
- Older adults must be open to try distraction as a pain relief technique.

Methods of distraction:

- Watching TV or movies
- Animal assisted therapy or own pet
- Listening to audiobooks
- Relaxation apps on mobile devices
- Reading
- Playing games, puzzles
- Participating in hobbies
- Listening to music
- Deep breathing
- Drawing, coloring, painting, or doodling
- Virtual reality techniques
- Enjoying familiar pictures
- Massage
- Humor

NOTE: The clinician should only administer non-drug therapies that are within their particular scope of practice. Follow the organizations policies and procedures regarding administration of non-drug therapies.

Revised November 2023

References

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