

MANAGING PAIN

What is pain?

- “Pain is whatever the person says it is”
- There are many causes of pain
- Pain affects everyone close to the person in pain
- Older adults may describe pain as aching, burning, grabbing, soreness, and/or discomfort
- Children may express pain differently than adults
- Children may become irritable or more sleepy
- Confused people or people who cannot speak may also have behavior changes when in pain
- Behavior changes can be pacing, crying or becoming angry at others

What to report to the Hospice Alliance Nurse:

- Your pain prevents you from doing your usual activities
- Where is the pain located
- What does the pain feel like (stabbing or burning)
- What makes the pain better
- What makes the pain worse
- How well the pain medicine is working
- Concerns about the medicines – how to take them or how to give them
- How often you are taking the pain medication
- Any side effects of the pain medication
- The Hospice nurse will review side effects with you and your loved one
- If you are unable to sleep because of pain

What can be done?

The good news is that there is much you, your caregiver, and the hospice team can do to control pain. They will talk with you about your choices. Medicines are often needed to relieve pain. The nurse will give you information about the medicines, when to take them and what you need to know.

- It is important to take the medicines as they are ordered
- Many people are concerned about pain medicines causing addiction. When pain medicines are taken because of pain, people do not become addicted to the medicine. If you or your loved one is worried about addiction, please talk about it with your Hospice nurse
- Most side effects may stop after taking the medicine for a few days

Other things that can make the pain better are:

Things that will take one’s mind off the pain may be helpful

- Activities that can distract you such as watching TV, playing a game, playing a musical instrument, or just thinking of other things
- Heat or cold, warm compresses or ice pack
- Pleasant smells of certain plants or fragrances such as lavender, etc.

MANAGING PAIN (continued)

- Coloring, drawing or storytelling
- Deep breathing
- Ask your Hospice team to teach you how to use these ways of relieving the pain

Your hospice team will tell you about the correct ways to dispose of medicines once they are no longer needed.

If you have any questions, please call us at 262-652-4400