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## Teaching Sheet

### **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](http://www.hpna.org).

**Reference**

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

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