



PATIENT / FAMILY TEACHING SHEETS

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

What are Complementary Therapies?

- Complementary therapies are non-drug symptom management tools. They may help relieve common discomforts, improve quality of life, and lessen suffering
- Therapies are used together with standard medical care
- They are not used in place of medical care

What are possible benefits of Complementary Therapies?

- Therapies promote a sense of well-being; healing; help relieve stress and tension; aid in relaxation; and create a sense of balance of mind, body and spirit
- Not all therapies work for everyone

What are some examples of Complementary Therapies?

- Aromatherapy uses essential oils from plants
- Art therapy uses drawings, art and craft activities
- Massage involves rubbing and gentle touching of skin and muscles
- Music therapy involves a person participating with the music by beating a rhythm, or singing a song, or listening intently, to the music of their choice

- Pet therapy is interaction with animals and their trainers or may include time with your own pet
- Reflexology provides gentle pressure to the feet or hands to restore a state of balance and relaxation
- Reiki (pronounced Ray-key) uses "laying on hands" providing a gentle touch for 'energy flow'
- Acupuncture involves the use of sharp, thin needles inserted in the body at very specific points to adjust and alter the body's energy flow
- Acupressure involves applying pressure on specific points of the body

Where do you find someone to provide Complementary Therapies?

- Your hospice and palliative care team can help you find the right complementary therapies for you
- Ask your team if you have questions about complementary therapies

Tell your hospice and palliative care team about any complementary therapies that you are already using.

Other HPNA Patient/Family Teaching Sheets are available at www.hpna.org.

Reference

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

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