



## Patient/Family Teaching Sheet

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# MANAGING DEPRESSION

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### 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

You can find other HPNA Patient Teaching Sheets on end-of-life care at <http://www.hpna.org/PatientEducation.asp>.

Approved by the HPNA Board of Directors July of 2005