

## Nondrug Pain and Symptom Management

### CONTROLLED BREATHING & GUIDED IMAGERY

CONTROLLED BREATHING AND GUIDED IMAGERY – used to help reduce stress that can cause muscle tension and increase pain.

Directions:

1. Help patient into a comfortable position.
2. Instruct patient to close eyes
3. Do not allow patient to fold arms or cross legs to avoid impairment of circulation.
4. Read the following out loud, slowly:
  - a. Breathe in slowly and deeply
  - b. As you breathe out slowly, feel yourself beginning to relax; feel the tension leaving your body. Now breathe in and out slowly and regularly, at whatever rate is comfortable for you.
  - c. To help you focus, breathe slowly and rhythmically. Breathe in as you say silently to yourself, “in, two, three.” Breathe out as you say silently to yourself, “out, two three.” Or, each time you breathe out, say silently to yourself a word such as “I am peaceful”, or “I am relaxed.” Find a word or phrase that helps you focus and slow your breathing.
  - d. You may imagine that you are doing this in a place you have previously found very calming and relaxing, such as lying in the sun at the beach.

Peaceful images may be added by asking the patient these questions:

- Can you remember any situation, even when you were a child, when you felt calm, peaceful, secure, hopeful, or comfortable?
- Do you get a dreamy feeling when you listen to music?
- Do you have any favorite music?
- Do you have any favorite poetry that you find uplifting or reassuring?
- Are you now or have you ever been religiously active? Do you have favorite readings, hymns, or prayers? Even if you haven't heard or thought of them for many years, childhood religious experiences may still be very soothing.

Families may record favorite music, poems, or prayers read by family members or clergy the patient could play at any time.

Adapted from the Nursing Home Pain Management Algorithm Clinical Trial, R01 NR009100, 7/1/05 – 4/30/10; Mary Ersek (PI)

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**NOTE: The RN or CNA should only administer non-drug therapies that are within his/her particular scope of practice. Please follow the policies and procedures of your facility regarding administration of non-drug therapies.**