

# **PorcuPAIN**

## **Don't Get Stuck With Pain**

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### **Tips to Help Residents With Chronic Pain**

It is important to remember that pain is a bio-psycho-social process. Pain is felt physically through a biological process in the central nervous system. A person's mood and other psychological factors, as well as social support influence how pain is experienced. How the person is treated can help to make the pain better or worse. The perception of pain is a factor in the intensity and duration of the pain. No one can judge someone else's pain. Prior pain history can sensitize the central nervous system, so that people are actually more vulnerable to feeling pain. Current pain conditions have a similar effect. Someone with arthritis is even more sensitive to pain from a fall, for example.

Due to the complexity of this bio-psycho-social experience the following are very significant things you can do to help:

- Listen. Validate the emotions of what the person is saying. Acknowledge they are afraid, upset, or hurting. You are "hearing" them.
- Have eye contact and stop what you are doing while you are listening.
- Be compassionate. Gentle. Understanding.
- Report all pain complaints.
- Follow-up until the pain is stabilized.
- Continue monitoring for pain and flare-ups.
- Advocate for people who are suffering. Many older people, especially with dementia will not ask for PRN pain medications.
- Offer non-medicinal comforts: a cold or warm washcloth for a headache or on throbbing feet for neuropathy; extra blankets for chills or added comfort; adjust pillows for sore backs-the right position can make a big difference.
- Refer to social service. The social worker is trained to provide intervention or can make a referral. Psycho-therapy is very beneficial.
- Treat depression.
- Let them know that you believe them.

#### MoLANE Planning Committee Members:

- Missouri Pain Initiative
- Missouri Association of Homes for the Aging
- Missouri Health Care Association
- Missouri Coalition Celebrating Care Continuum Change
- Missouri Association of Nursing Home Administrators
- Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
- Missouri League for Nursing
- Missouri State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- Missouri Board of Nursing Home Administrators
- National Association of Health Care Assistants
- Primaris, Missouri's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization
- Quality Improvement Program for Missouri (QIPMO)

**Watch for more PAIN tips!**