

# Antipsychotic Alternatives

The following information suggests ideas for reducing antipsychotic drug use. A carefully monitored use of the alternatives with frequent reassessment is suggested. Always start by assessing the resident for pain\*.

## General Principles

- Start with a pain assessment.
- Provide for a sense of security.
- Apply the 5 Magic Tools (Knowing what the resident likes to See, Smell, Touch, Taste, Hear).
- Get to know the resident, including their history and family life, and what they previously enjoyed. Learn the resident's life story. Help the resident create a memory box.
- Play to the resident's strengths.
- Encourage independence.
- Use pets, children and volunteers.
- Involve the family by giving them a task to support the resident.
- Use a validated pain assessment tool to assure non-verbal pain is addressed.\*
- Provide consistent caregivers.
- Screen for depression & possible interventions.
- Reduce noise (paging, alarms, TV's, etc.).
- Be calm and self-assured.
- Attempt to identify triggering events that stimulate behaviors.
- Employ distraction methods based upon their work and career.
- Offer choices.

## What to try when the resident resists care

### Therapeutic Intervention

- Evaluate recent medication changes, especially if the behavior is new.
- Determine if the resident is in pain, and if so, why? Treat the pain.\*
- Evaluate whether the care can be performed at a different time.
- Determine if the resident is trying to communicate a specific need.
- Evaluate the resident's sleep patterns.
- Place the resident in bed when he or she is fatigued.
- Evaluate if there has been a change in the resident's routine.
- Provide a positive distraction, or something the resident enjoys.
- Is the resident hungry? Offer the resident a snack prior to providing care.
- Provide a periodic exercise program throughout the day (e.g. A walk to dine program).
- Encourage wheelchair/chair pushups, or assist the resident to stand periodically.
- Provide activities to assess and provide entertainment.
- Encourage repositioning frequently.

### Environmental & Equipment Intervention

- Use assistive devices (wedge cushion, solid seat for wheelchair, side or trunk bolsters, pommel cushion, Dycem, etc.).
- Evaluate the resident for an appropriate size chair and proper fit.
- Evaluate alternative seating to relieve routine seating pressure/pain.
- Use an overstuffed chair, reclining wheelchair, non-wheeled chairs, or wingback chair.
- Place a call bell in reach of the resident.
- Provide an over-bed table to allow for diversional activities.
- Place a water pitcher in reach of the resident.
- Place the resident's favorite items in their room to provide them comfort.
- Allow access to personal items that remind the resident of their family, especially photos.
- Encourage routine family visits with pets.
- Provide consistent caregivers.
- Evaluate if the resident's environment can be modified to better meet their needs. (i.e. Determine if the resident's environment can be more personalized.)

\* A pain assessment should include non-verbal signs of pain. If you do not have a pain assessment that includes non-verbal identifiers, go to:

<http://www.dads.state.tx.us/qualitymatters/qcp/pain/painad.pdf>

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## What to consider when resident is disruptive in group functions

### *Therapeutic Intervention*

- Evaluate new medications, antibiotics especially, and assess pain.
- Remove resident from group, evaluate for group stress
- Determine if resident requires toileting.
- Determine if resident is hungry, and if so, provide them with a small snack. If the resident is thirsty, provide the resident a beverage.
- If this is a new behavior in a group, evaluate what is different this time.
- Assure resident has had a rest period prior to group activity.
- Assure there are no medical complications (low/high blood sugar).
- Assure resident is not in pain.\*
- Return resident to group function, if possible.

### *Environmental & Equipment Intervention*

- Determine whether clothing is appropriate for a particular function.
- Evaluate if the resident has well-fitting shoes, and ensure they do not rub the resident's feet.
- Evaluate ambulation devices (wheelchair, walker) that are in good working condition.
- Ensure there is adequate lighting, especially at night.
- Ensure room/function is not overly crowded.
- Ensure room is not too warm or cold.
- Consider providing snacks and refreshments for all group functions.
- Ensure sound in group functions is loud enough so the resident can hear.
- Provide consistent caregivers.
- Evaluate if this program fits into the resident's area of interest.

## What to consider with a sudden mood change, such as depression

### *Therapeutic Intervention*

- Evaluate any new medications and assess pain\*.
- Evaluate for orthostatic hypotension and change positions slowly.
- Reevaluate physical needs such as toileting, comfort, pain, thirst and timing of needs.
- Rule out medical problem (high/low blood sugar changes).
- Engage resident in conversation about their favorite activity, positive experiences, pets, etc.
- Touch if appropriate while recognizing personal body space.
- Anticipate customary schedules and accommodate personal preferences.
- Evaluate balance for sub-clinical disturbances such as inner ear infections.
- Validate feelings and mobilize the resident. For instance, if the resident states, I want to get up, reply, You want to get up? to confirm you heard them correctly. If so, act on the resident's request.
- Evaluate hearing and vision.
- Discern if talk therapy is possible.
- Assess sleep patterns.

### *Environmental & Equipment Intervention*

- Assess for changes in the resident's environment.
- Assess for changes in the resident's equipment.
- Involve family members to assure them that there have been no changes within the family, without the facility's knowledge.
- Provide routines for consistency.
- Provide consistent caregivers.
- Provide nightlights for security.
- Employ the use of a memory box.
- Employ functional maintenance / 24-hour plan.
- Encourage the resident, if able, to verbalize his or her feelings.
- Eliminate noise and disruption.
- Employ the use of a sensory room or tranquility room.

## Verbally Abusive/Physically Abusive

### *Therapeutic Intervention*

- Begin with medical evaluation to rule out physical or medication problems.
- Evaluate the resident for acute medical conditions such as urinary tract infections, upper respiratory infections, ear infections or other infections.
- Evaluate the resident for pain, comfort and/or other physical needs such as hunger, thirst, position changes, bowel and bladder urges.
- Attempt to identify triggering events or issues that stimulate the behavior.
- Consider using a behavior tracking form to assist in identification of triggers and trending patterns.
- Consult with the resident's family regarding past coping mechanisms that proved effective during times of increased stress levels.
- Provide companionship.
- Validate feelings such as saying, You sound like you are angry.
- Redirect.
- Employ active listening skills and address potential issues identified.
- Set limits.
- Develop trust by assigning consistent caregivers whenever possible.
- Avoid confrontation. Decrease your voice level.
- Provide a sense of safety by approaching in a calm/quiet demeanor.
- Provide rest periods.
- Provide social services referral if needed.
- Provide a psychologist/psychiatrist referral if needed.
- Provide touch therapy and/or massage therapy on the hands or back.
- Reduce external stimuli (overhead paging, TV, radio noise, etc.).
- Evaluate staffing patterns and trends.
- Evaluate sleep/wake patterns.
- Maintain a regular schedule.
- Limit caffeine.
- Avoid sensory overload.

### *Environmental & Equipment Intervention*

- Use relaxation techniques (i.e. tapes, videos, music etc.).
- Help the resident create theme/memory/reminiscence boxes/books.
- Help the resident create a magnification box to create awareness of the resident's voice level and provide feedback.
- Use a lava lamp, soothe sounders, and active mobile.
- Play tapes and videos of family and/or familiar relatives or friends.
- Move to a quiet area, possibly a more familiar area, if needed. Decrease external stimuli.
- Use fish tanks.
- Encourage family visits, and visits from favorite pets.
- Identify if another resident is a trigger for this behavior.

## Pacing/ Wandering At Risk for Elopement

### *Therapeutic Intervention*

- Find ways to meet a resident's needs to be needed, loved and busy while being sensitive to their personal space.
- Provide diverse activities that correspond with past lifestyles/preferences.
- Consider how medications, diagnoses, Activities of Daily Living schedule, weather or how other residents affect wandering.
- Evaluate the need for a Day Treatment Program for targeted residents.
- Help resident create theme/memory/reminiscence boxes.
- Provide companionship.
- Provide opportunities for exercise particularly when waiting.
- Pre-meal activities.
- Singing, rhythmic movements, dancing, etc.
- Identify customary routines and allow for preferences.
- Help the resident create a photo collage or album of memorable events.
- Provide structured, high-energy activities and subsequent relaxation activities.
- Take the resident for a walk.
- Provide distraction and redirection.
- Provide written/verbal reassurance about where he/she is and why.
- Alleviate fears.
- Ask permission before you touch, hug etc.
- Assess/evaluate if there is a pattern in the pacing or wandering.
- Assess for resident's personal agenda and validate behaviors.
- Ask family to record reassuring messages on tape.
- Evaluate for a restorative program.
- Perform a physical workup.

### *Environmental & Equipment Intervention*

- Remove objects that remind the patient/resident of going home (hats, coats, etc.).
- Individualize the environment. Make the environment like the resident's home. Place objects within the environment that are familiar to the resident.
- Place a large numerical clock at the resident's bedside to provide orientation to time of day as it relates to customary routines.
- Ensure the courtyard is safe for the resident.
- Decrease noise level (especially overhead paging).
- Evaluate floor patterns.
- Evaluate rest areas in halls.
- Evaluate camouflaging of doors.
- Evaluate visual cues to identify safe areas.
- Play a favorite movie or video.
- Put unbreakable or plastic mirrors at exits.
- Place Stop and Go signs.
- Evaluate the WanderGuard system.
- Use relaxation tapes.
- Evaluate and use, as necessary, visual barriers and murals.
- Evaluate wandering paths.
- Evaluate room identifiers.