

Relieving Anxiety without Medication: Agrace Is Your Resource

When your residents are seriously ill or nearing end of life, it's common for them to feel anxious. Recognizing and treating anxiety can be difficult because the outward signs are different in each person. Agrace has experience that may be able to help, whether your resident is a hospice patient or not.

All of these signs can indicate anxiety:

- restlessness, irritability or not being able to relax
- panic or extreme nervousness
- appearing exhausted or overwhelmed
- trouble falling or staying asleep, nightmares
- getting upset about things that normally would not upset the person
- trouble concentrating
- worrying about what could or may happen
- heart palpitations and/or rapid breathing

The ripple effect: Unlike other physical symptoms, anxiety doesn't always keep to itself. Some of its expressions can make other residents and your staff feel upset as well. You can try these non-pharmacological interventions to help your resident find relief:

- Reduce stimuli: provide a quiet, peaceful setting without loud noises or bright lights.
- Play soothing music or guided relaxation recordings.
- Help them focus on pleasant thoughts and use deep, controlled breathing.
- Keep them to a routine as much as possible and keep surroundings familiar.

- Encourage them to talk about their feelings, fears and concerns with someone who will listen and provide support.
- Take them for a short walk or find a place where they can relax, uninterrupted.
- Suggest a quiet, relaxing activity, such as coloring, doing a puzzle or reading a good book.

Whenever you're struggling to relieve your residents' anxiety, consider all the ways Agrace can be a resource.

If an Agrace patient is anxious and not getting relief with these methods, please talk with your Agrace nurse case manager. We can explore other strategies for relief, arrange a spiritual & grief support assessment, and work with providers to assess whether medication is needed.

Trained volunteer support: Additionally, ask Agrace about volunteer support. We may be able to provide our patients a specially trained volunteer to give them more 1:1 time. Our Certified Dementia Practitioner coaches our volunteers on the special ways to care for patients with dementia, who often experience anxiety.

Palliative care consultations: If the resident with anxiety is not a hospice patient, ask about a palliative care consultation. PalliaHealth by Agrace can make in-person NP visits to residents with poorly controlled anxiety. We can also arrange telemedicine consults between your staff and our geriatric psychiatrist to discuss the case.

Weekly Stand-up Meetings Help Coordinate Care for Residents on Hospice

A lot can happen in seven days, or even over a weekend. For hospice patients and their caregivers, that's not usually a good thing.

That's why Agrace invites you to meet with us each week to briefly discuss your residents who are hospice patients. "Stand-up meetings," usually just 30 minutes long, bring together your key staff and your Agrace care team (RN case manager, social worker and clinical team manager).

For the past year, Agrace Clinical Team Manager Nicole Simmons and her staff have held stand-up meetings each Monday morning at Oakwood Village, a retirement community on Madison's west side. They meet with the Oakwood RNs, social workers and administrator, Kim Blum, who says the meetings "create a more cohesive team, address resident needs more promptly and recap after-hours concerns."

"It's a half hour of getting right to the point," says Nicole. "We talk about what happened over the



Kim Blum

weekend, and what we need to do during the week to get our patients to a good place. We review any changes of condition, any new admissions from the past week and any calls that came in through our Triage Team. And we get a heads-up on new admissions for the week ahead."



Nicole Simmons

Nicole continues, "We're focusing on needs and coming up with solutions more quickly. It's, 'Mary fell and she's having pain. Could we review her meds together?'"

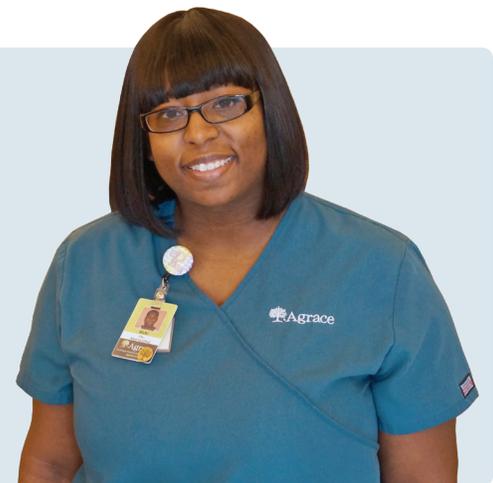
Agrace RN Case Manager Brian James adds, "That half hour saves so much time, because I know what they're doing for the patient and what I need to do. It saves a lot of calling, too, because we're all on the same page for the week."

If you're interested in holding weekly stand-up meetings with us, please contact your Agrace RN, social worker or liaison to coordinate a schedule. This connection can have a meaningful effect on your residents' lives when time is short and comfort is the top priority.

Learn about Reducing CNA Turnover

Consistent, quality *care* starts with consistent *staffing*. If you struggle to train and retain CNAs, please join Agrace's Traci Raether, assistant vice president of Home Care Operations, and other health care leaders for a free webinar for Wisconsin nursing home staff. "Empower, Recruit, Retain: Reducing CNA Turnover" starts **Monday, June 17, at 1 p.m. CDT**. To register, visit <http://bit.ly/2Ubq686>.

Ricki, Agrace CNA since 2006



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