Non-pharmacological Approaches to Depression Management

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What Is Depression?

Depression is a brain disorder that causes persistent feelings of sadness and loss of pleasure or interest in activities for long periods of time. A qualified professional may diagnose depression if these feelings persist daily for at least two weeks.

Ways to Help Residents Manage Symptoms of Depression

Use this resource for residents with a diagnosis of depression.



Mental Health Therapy

Residents will have better outcomes when therapy is part of their care plan. Some common therapies residents can explore with mental health professionals include:

- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Problem-solving therapy
- Reminiscence therapy

Family and Community Social Supports

Relationships and social connections can help enhance mood. Create opportunities with families and community organizations to promote social interactions for residents by:

- Encouraging family involvement and visitations.
- Collaborating with local volunteer organizations to lead or assist with activities, such as book club, birthday and holiday celebrations, scrapbooking, etc.
- Coordinating with diverse faith-based groups for music and worship services.
- Creating opportunities for sharing in group activities.



Lifestyle Changes

Engaging in cognitive-boosting exercises and activities can help decrease symptoms of depression. Ensure a variety of activities are available to residents, such as:

- Aerobic activities
- Strength training
- Yoga and meditation
- Mindfulness exercises
- One-on-one conversations
- Light therapy
- Dancing
- Music therapy
- Gardening
- Coloring
- Puzzles
- Journaling



Nutrition

Although no single nutrient can cure depression, studies have shown that specific foods can improve depressive symptoms. Work with a registered dietitian to create a meal plan specific to the resident's needs.

Encourage

- Vegetables
- Berries
- Fish
- Beans
- Olive oil
- Chamomile



Avoid

- Juices
- Soft drinks
- Sweets
- White bread
- Pasta
- Artificial sweeteners



These non-pharmacological approaches are not meant to be a substitute or replacement for medical advice for the management of depression. Consult a mental health professional for severe or persistent depressive symptoms.

References:

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