



TIPS for What Should You Report

Because the nursing assistant is often in a home more frequently than other team members, the nursing assistant is the person who often learns things first about a patient and a family. Some things need to be told to the nurse so that appropriate interventions by other team members can be made. The nurse assigned to your patient must be notified of any changes noted in the patient or family. Below are some suggestions of the things to report that are in the categories of Mind, Body and Spirit.

Mind

- Sleeping a lot
- Not at all able to sleep
- Sudden confusion
- Changes in attitude: suddenly angry or withdrawn or sad, increased irritability
- Suddenly unaware of surroundings
- Inability to recognize familiar people
- Agitation
- Inability to be comforted

Body

- Complaints of pain
- Signs of pain: frowning, moaning, groaning during movement or when still, refusing to move, refusing a bath, crying
 - For children this can also include intense concentration on a game, book or TV show or withdrawal from people and activities
- Skin problems including any sores anywhere, tears in the skin, skin looking a different color (yellow, pale, red), bruises, rashes, itching
- Changes in bladder or bowel function
- Refusal to eat or drink
- Limbs that look different
- Dressings that have come off

- Sudden loss of sight or hearing
- Changes in breathing
- Weakness or changes in mobility
- Falling

Spirit

- Angry and/or belligerent
- Talking about “ending it all”
- Expressions of anger toward God, caregivers or those around them
- Disgust with self
- Sudden refusal to talk with anyone
- Sudden refusal to have visitors
- A sense that the patient is depressed
- Near death awareness such as seeing and hearing people who have died or talking about taking a trip

Other issues

- Pills found in places where they do not belong. Is the patient hiding pills? Is the family hiding pills?
- Is the family refusing to give medications?
- Are there activities that might compromise your or the patient's safety?
- Have you ever found the patient alone? Laying in stool or urine? Complaining of being hungry or thirsty?
- Have you seen signs of caregiver stress like crying, anger, not caring for themselves?
- Has the patient voiced concerns about loss of finances?

Do not attempt to talk with the patient or family about how to solve the things that you are observing until you have discussed them with the nurse assigned to your patient. Together, working as partners, you will come up with a plan to take care of things for the patient and the family.

Disclaimer: This TIPS sheet is intended to be a guide for observational reporting and is by no means all inclusive. All unusual observations or observations of concern whether listed or not should be reported to your RN/supervisor.

Other HPNA TIPs Sheets are available at www.hpna.org.

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