Tips for Careworkers: Anxiety

What it is: Feeling anxious means a person feels scared or worried about something. This is normal, and usually goes away.

Anxiety is when these feelings don’t go away.

Why it matters: Many older people experience anxiety. Anxiety can be more common when people have a serious illness or at the end of life.

In an older person anxiety can be difficult to see because it is often associated with loneliness, depression and/or dementia.

When a person experiences anxiety and depression together, their symptoms and outcomes are more severe.

What I need to know: Anxiety can create physical symptoms, and changed behaviours and thoughts. These responses affect a person's health and quality of life.

Do

Look out for and report to nursing/supervisory staff, if a person:

• becomes unable to relax
• becomes bad tempered
• has trouble sleeping or concentrating
• feels very tired or very awake
• is short of breath.

Do

Gently ask the person “Is there anything else troubling you?” or “Is there anything you would like to talk about?” It can help a person to talk about things that worry them.
My reflections:

What is anxiety?

What signs of anxiety should I report to the nurse or supervisor?

My notes:

See related palliAGED Practice Tip Sheets:
- Distress at the End of Life
- Pain Management
- People with Specific Needs