

# ANXIETY, AGITATION OR DISTRESS: *how to support people with anxiety*

<b>VERSION No</b>	1
<b>REVIEWED BY</b>	Manager (MP)
<b>NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	2



## Policy

*The aim of this policy is to ensure that staff are aware that from time to time residents may have anxiety or are agitated or in distress and therefore, it is important for staff to know what is the appropriate action in these situations. It is important that staff also investigate the reasons for the behaviour and co-ordinate treatment if appropriate.*

## Signs of anxiety, agitated or distressed behaviour may include:

- ? Frustration
- ? Boredom
- ? Fear
- ? Confusion
- ? Pain
- ? Search for safety
- ? Inability to request help
- ? Inappropriate verbal or motor activity:

### a) Verbal behaviour:

- ☞ Incoherent babbling
- ☞ Screaming
- ☞ Repetitive questions

### b) Physical behaviour:

- ☞ Pacing
- ☞ Wandering
- ☞ Repetitive body motions
- ☞ Hoarding
- ☞ Shadowing

## Triggers / specific causes may include:

- ✗ Noisy environment
- ✗ Crowded environment
- ✗ Change of environment
- ✗ Incontinence
- ✗ Constipation
- ✗ Room t°, too warm
- ✗ Room t°, too cold
- ✗ Urine infection
- ✗ Chest infection
- ✗ Other (*this list is not exhaustive*)

## Action plan to manage behaviour and to calm, comfort and alleviate anxiety, minimise agitation and minimise distress:

### ☞ Attempt to diffuse the situation:

- ? change the immediate environment to accommodate the resident's wishes, if too noisy or crowded

- ? appear calm and speak slowly using clear and short sentences
- ? avoid being patronising / condescending / demeaning / belittling / superior
- ? avoid telling the resident to calm down
- ? be courteous and use the resident's name

- 👉 Distract the resident with another task, situation or thought process instead of dwelling on the problem
- 👉 Use art, music or other activities to engage the resident and divert their attention away from the anxiety
- 👉 Do not argue or reason with a resident who has lost the ability to do so, and ***do not be confrontational***
- 👉 Follow the resident's thought pattern and try to enter the resident's sense of reality
- 👉 If essential, the use of white lies can sometimes assist in managing or calming the situation
- 👉 If necessary administer any PRN meds for pain, anxiety, constipation, record and monitor the effects
- 👉 Liaise with the resident's GP / CPN / Psychiatrist / family
- 👉 If necessary, take urine sample to check for urine infection and liaise with GP