

## Complementary Therapies

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### What are Complementary Therapies?

- Complementary therapies are non-drug symptom management tools. They may help relieve common discomforts, improve quality of life and lessen suffering
- Therapies are used together with standard Western medical care. They are not an alternative to standard care

### What are possible benefits of Complementary Therapies?

- Benefits of each therapy may be unique to each person
- Not all therapies work for everyone
- Therapies promote
  - A sense of well-being; help relieve stress and tension; and aid in relaxation
  - Healing
  - Sense of balance of mind, body and spirit

### What are some examples of Complementary Therapies?

- Aromatherapy uses essential oils from plants
- Art therapy uses drawings, art and craft activities
- Massage involves rubbing and gentle touching of skin and muscles
- Music therapy person participates with the music by beating a rhythm or singing a song or person intently listens to the music of their choice

- Pet therapy interaction with animals and their trainers including time with their own pets
- Reflexology provides gentle pressure to the feet or hands to restore a state of balance and relaxation
- Reiki (pronounced Ray-key) is gentle touch over most of the fully clothed body to move the life energy through the body
- Healing touch uses gentle touch to influence and support the human energy system within and around the body

Where do you find someone to provide Complementary Therapies?

- Your hospice and palliative care team can help you find the right complementary therapies for you

Always ask your team if you have questions about complementary therapies.

Share any complementary therapies that you are already using with your team.

You can find other HPNA Patient Teaching Sheets on end-of-life care at <http://www.hpna.org/PatientEducation.asp>.

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