

Eli's Hospice Insider

CARE TIP: Reiki Can Be an Effective Pain Management and Spiritual Aid

Is your hospice incorporating this modality in its toolkit?

Opioids remain the gold standard for treating most types of severe, ongoing pain. But best practice palliative pain management also includes non-pharmacological approaches that promote relaxation and ease spiritual distress and fear.

Case in point: Some hospice and palliative care programs have practitioners certified in Reiki offer that modality as part of a holistic approach to care (get an overview of Reiki at www.reiki.org/faq/WhatsReiki.html).

As one example, **Harold Bobb, MD**, a hospice medical director in Baltimore, Md., incorporates Reiki in his practice with palliative care patients. "Reiki is a form of human contact that helps the patient with spiritual connection at a time when that's very important to many people," says Bobb.

Reiki isn't a religion or faith, Bobb adds. Instead, it's a method with five basic principles, he relays:

1. I will not worry just for today.
2. I will not be angry just for today.
3. I will be grateful just for today.
4. I will work hard just for today.
5. I will give kindness and compassion just for today.

As for his own philosophy, Bobb says he prefers not to think of people as dying but rather as "living the later days of their lives. And having a spiritual connection at that time can lead patients away from fear," he adds.

Bobb has seen people experience significant pain relief from using Reiki because "their fear is alleviated."

"If you can use a modality, such as Reiki, to help a person relax and feel connected, that can ease their pain," agrees **Diana Waugh, RN, BSN**, a nursing consultant in Waterville, Ohio, who does work with nursing homes and hospices.