

## Long-Term Care Survey Alert

### **Tool: These Indicators Can Help Tell You How a Resident Is Responding to Therapeutic Touch**

Here's how you'll know that your touch is welcome, says skilled touch expert.

Positive Indicators (the person is responding to your attention and touch in a positive way)

- Body relaxation (i.e. shoulders drop, head drops forward, hands open, arms or legs uncrossed, mouth opens)
- Tight muscles soften/relax
- Sounds such as groans, "purr"
- Breath release or sigh
- Change in breathing pattern from chest to belly, fast to slow or irregular to regular
- Genuine smile
- Movement toward you
- Eye contact
- Stomach "gurgling"
- Change in skin color (from white to pink)
- Change in body temperature (from cold to warm)
- Emotional release or expression such as laughing, crying, talking
- Falling asleep, snoring

Negative Indicators (person is not responding well to your attention and/or touch)

- Holding or tightening of body parts
- Clenching fists and/or arm crossing
- Stiffening head or neck
- Clenching teeth or jaw
- Holding breath or change in breathing patterns from belly to chest, slow to fast
- Non-verbal "growl"
- Movement away from you
- Physical or verbal agitation Source: Ann Catlin, LMT, OTR [www.compassionate-touch.org](http://www.compassionate-touch.org) Handout from a presentation on skilled touch at the November 2009 American Association of Homes & Services for the Aging annual meeting.

