



# painACT

pain Aged Care Training



## Pain and non-pharmacological management

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**10**  
min

Time needed to run this module with your staff

## OVERVIEW OF MODULE

This education module provides staff with an overview of non-pharmacological approaches to the management of pain in aged care.

### Learning objectives

- 1** Identify when non-pharmacological approaches to pain management should be considered
- 2** Identify when an aged care resident/patient/client may be experiencing negative thoughts due to their pain and describe ways you can help encourage positive thinking to help manage pain
- 3** Recognise pain management is based on individual goals

### Key messages

-  When managing pain in aged care, non-pharmacological approaches should be considered before medication is prescribed
-  Personal care staff and lifestyle staff can make the most difference when providing non-pharmacological care for pain management
-  Providing comfort is a non-pharmacological approach to managing pain in aged care

### Length of the education module

The 10 minutes includes:



Self-led, pre-video reflection, completed by participants on their handout



Watching a short video



Post-video discussion/questions led by trainer, focusing on the learning objectives for this module

## Trainer preparation prior to running the module

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At least 30 minutes should be set aside for the trainer to prepare for running this module. The following preparations are suggested:

- Review this module guide and discussion notes
- Watch the video before training
- Review non-pharmacological pain management approaches currently available or used at your aged care facility/aged care provider organisation (e.g., what allied health are currently used such as occupational therapist, psychologist, physiotherapist, Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS), heat packs, massage, complementary and alternative therapies)
- Read key resources when needed (see below)
- Print participant handouts, one for each staff member attending the education module
- Practice the session using the Education Module Script provided, aiming to complete it within 10 minutes

## Key resources to support this topic (background reading)

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- For a full and comprehensive exploration of this topic, refer to the source reference "Pain in Residential Aged Care Facilities: Management Strategies, 2nd Edition": <https://www.apsoc.org.au/publications> (optional)
- Primary resources are the Pain Management Guide (PMG) Toolkit 2nd Edition and the Pain in Residential Aged Care Facilities: Management Strategies 2nd Edition
- In particular, the following resources are relevant for information on non-pharmacological pain management approaches in aged care and must be utilised in the context of the information contained in the "Pain in Residential Aged Care Facilities: Management Strategies, 2nd Edition" book, rather than in isolation:
  - These resources can be found here: <https://www.apsoc.org.au/Pain-in-RACF2-Resources>
    - Resource 5: Practical examples for responding to unhelpful thoughts (3-minute read)
    - Resource 6: Psychological ways of managing persistent pain (5-minute read)
    - Resource 7: Tips for sleep (2-minute read)
    - Resource 8: Moving with pain: management principles (2-minute read)
    - Resource 9: Considerations when using complementary therapies (1-minute read)

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### Material needed to run the education module

- A computer with sound/speaker capacity to show the short video for this module
- Printed participant handouts
- Printed copy of this document for you to refer to

# Running the education module

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The following script can be used to run this module with staff at your aged care facility/aged care provider organisation. This script includes:

- **boxed text**, which can be read directly to the staff when running this module
- **<directions>**, which are actions to do at certain times e.g., playing short videos, giving out participant handouts
- *Text in italics*, which is additional information to promote discussion e.g., prompt questions for the trainer to ask to nudge the discussion forward, suggested answers to discussion questions

## Education module script

**<Begin session by giving a participant handout to each staff member.>**

**1**

### Introduction

Today, we are going to be running one of the education sessions that is part of the painACT Program. Each session focuses on one pain topic for about 10 minutes.

The topic today is 'Pain and non-pharmacological management'. Today we will learn more about pain management without using medication.

First, take a few minutes to jot down your thoughts on the reflection question.

Then I'll show you a short video to give you an overview about pain and non-pharmacological management in aged care.

**<Show the video 'Pain and non-pharmacological management' (video runtime is 2.5 minutes).>**

The video showed how important the personal care staff member is in non-pharmacological pain management.

Are there any questions or comments about the video?

**<Allow for a minute of comments or questions.>**

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**2**

### Discussion about video

**<Begin discussion on key messages. Let participants know that it might be helpful to write some notes under the 'post-video discussion/questions' section on the handout. Also prompt them to complete the post-video questions to help solidify their learnings.>**



### **When managing pain in aged care, non-pharmacological approaches should be considered before medication is prescribed**

The aim of this discussion point is for staff to understand the different non-pharmacological approaches currently used or available at your facility.

We are going to talk about non-pharmacological pain management approaches at this aged care facility/aged care provider organisation.

My first question is:

Thinking about our residents/patients/clients, what are some of the different pain management approaches that we use here that are non-pharmacological?

**<Allow for 2 minutes of responses from staff.>**

*Depending on your facility, possible approaches may include: heat and cold packs, guided exercise, massage, changing the physical environment (e.g., raising or lowering the bed, changing the chair for easier sit-to-stand), manual handling procedures that minimise pain, maximising comfort where possible, educating aged care residents/patients/clients, psychological approaches (e.g., distraction, reassurance, cognitive behaviour therapy).*

Thank you for sharing. As you can see, there are a wide range of non-pharmacological approaches that we can use to help relieve pain. We try these approaches first as we prefer them over medications, which often have side effects for older people. If we do prescribe medications, we use them in combination with non-pharmacological approaches.



### **Personal care staff and lifestyle staff can make the most difference when providing non-pharmacological care for pain management**



### **Providing comfort is a non-pharmacological approach to managing pain in aged care**

The aim of this discussion point is for staff to see that many non-pharmacological approaches are either provided by personal care staff or with personal care staff assistance, and to recognise that providing comfort to aged care residents/patients/clients is a valid non-pharmacological approach. Making sure they are comfortable, and have meaningful activities can play a significant role in preventing and/or managing their pain.

We often don't think of the value non-pharmacological approaches add when managing pain.

Providing comfort may be the most appropriate approach to preventing pain and/or providing relief from minor symptoms of pain.

My final question is: what are some different ways that we can provide comfort?

**<Allow for three or so minutes of responses from staff.>**

*Some examples for how to ensure aged care residents/patients/clients are comfortable:*

- *Environment/equipment being fit for purpose*
- *Providing appropriate physical support e.g., a blanket or pillow*
- *Pressure care cushions and mattresses*
- *Careful manual handling*
- *Emotional comfort – from accompanying the resident/patient/client as they walk, to reassuring them*
  - *This also includes acknowledging and validating their experiences*
- *Social connection and interaction, providing companionship*

3

### Wrapping up

Does anyone have any questions?

**<Allow brief time for questions if possible or invite staff to ask you questions personally whenever they have a moment.>**

All right, take some time to record your answers to the questions in your participant handout, but that's it for today! Thank you, everyone.

For more information, refer to the "Pain in Residential Aged Care Facilities: Management Strategies, 2nd Edition"  
resource: <https://www.apsoc.org.au/publications>

