MANAGING DEPRESSION

What is Depression?
- A range of feelings that may include sadness, gloom, numbness, emptiness, helplessness and hopelessness
- Occurs frequently in chronic and terminal illnesses
- Symptoms are often the same as those of illness

What are the Signs and Symptoms of Depression?
- Fatigue
- Sadness, depressed mood
- Loss of appetite with weight loss
- No interest or pleasure in daily activities
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Sleep problems
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, guilt
- Difficulty focusing and thinking
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- Agitation or slowing down

What to report to the Hospice/Palliative Care Team?
- Any of the above symptoms
- A known history of depression
- Any symptoms such as pain, nausea, difficulty breathing
- Change in medications the team may be unaware of
What can be done for Depression?

Depression is common at the end-of-life. There is a wide range of intensity of depression. The team will help you sort out causes of depression. They will discuss treatment options with you. You may

- Optimize physical status with rest and nutrition
- Set small, realistic, achievable goals
- Utilize relaxation techniques
- Consider complementary therapies such as aromatherapy, art and music therapy and your caregiver may
- Keep the patient and area safe
- Let you know that they will be there
- Allow you to express feelings
- Allow you to control as much as possible related to treatment decisions and activities

Reference