Pain and Distress

Pain and distress can manifest atypically in patients with limited communication and can be difficult to recognize. Nonspecific changes in vital signs, appearance, and behaviour, including being less responsive and more withdrawn or new onset of behaviours that challenge (see guideline Behaviours that Challenge), might be the only indicators of pain and distress.72, 73

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<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Types of Knowledge</th>
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<td>With caregiver input and adapted tools, such as the Chronic Pain Scale for Nonverbal Adults with Intellectual Disabilities74, 75 or the Non-Communicating Adult Pain Checklist76, 77, assess for pain and its intensity.</td>
<td>Empirical Expert</td>
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<td>Common sources of pain include injury, dental caries, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), arthritis, constipation, and dysuria.78-80 Distress can be a response to pain, challenges in the person’s environment (eg, sensory hypersensitivity), lack of supports or some negative life experience.72, 73</td>
<td>Empirical Expert</td>
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Employ a comprehensive and systematic approach to assessing behaviours that challenge that might be communicating pain or other causes of distress (see guideline Behaviours that Challenge).14, 72, 81, 82

Icon Legend

**Recommendation Strength:**

- Clinicians’ top recommendation  ✔ Recommended  ✔ ✔ Strongly Recommended

**Types of Knowledge:**

- Blue and grey colours specify different knowledge subtypes. Half circle symbols indicate that reviewed publications pertain to the background information to the recommendations that is presented in the first column.

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References


Icon Legend

**Recommendation Strength:**

- 🏛 Clinicians’ top recommendation
- ✔️ Recommended
- ✔️ ✔️ Strongly Recommended

**Types of Knowledge:**

- ❗️❗️❗️❗️ Blue and grey colours specify different knowledge subtypes. Half circle symbols indicate that reviewed publications pertain to the background information to the recommendations that is presented in the first column.

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