

The **five domains** of pain consist of the physical, spiritual, psychiatric, emotional and familial. Each pain is to be assessed accurately upon admission in order for good palliative care to be initiated and maintained. Use of appropriate pain instruments is critical.

<p>1. Physical Pain</p>	<p>Physical pain is pain in the body. There are many misconceptions about pain. Most people believe aches and pains are to be expected as one ages, and elders frequently feel they should not report them. Physical pain left untreated can lead to a loss of stamina and independence. It is important that we allow each resident to express his or her physical pain and its impact on their lives.</p>
<p>2. Emotional Pain</p>	<p>Emotional pain is the most difficult to relieve. It can take on many forms of feelings: sadness, guilt, regret, and anger. A person who has broken a hip not only has the physical pain to endure, but the incident may lead him or her to an entire lifestyle change. This type of emotional pain is never easy to express. It takes time to name. Even in the naming, a person may find it is so personal that it never gets shared. We remain present so they know they are not alone.</p>
<p>3. Psychiatric Pain</p>	<p>Psychiatric Pain refers to suffering caused by alterations in cognition, mood or behavior that go beyond “normal reactions” and into the realm of psychiatric illness. These symptoms are important to identify because the associated suffering can often be much improved with proper identification and management which often requires psychotropic medication.</p> <p>Two specific psychiatric syndromes which are prevalent in nursing home patients with co-morbid medical conditions are Delirium and Major Depressive Disorder. Each of these illnesses causes significant suffering to patients and families when not properly identified and adequately treated. Competent care requires that we identify symptoms of Delirium and Depression as soon as possible so that treatment can be initiated and suffering minimized.</p>
<p>4. Spiritual Pain</p>	<p>Spiritual pain brings a feeling of a temporary loss of connection between the person and God. A person experiencing spiritual pain often feels that the meaning to his or her life is gone. The person may no longer find comfort in prayer or in his or her own faith traditions and begins to feel guilty. People who are experiencing spiritual suffering may feel spiritual concern, spiritual despair or spiritual distress. Each of these must be recognized by the caregiver in order to help bring balance to a person’s life again in the context of the new situation.</p>
<p>5. Family Pain</p>	<p>Family pain can be a lack of understanding by the family of the disease process and the situation. Expectations may be a lot higher than we can actually provide. The expectation of the resident is different as well, and can be out of sync with the families’ expectations. Often a loved one’s disease affects each family member in ways that are difficult to express to one another.</p>