

IDENTIFYING DELIRIUM

ABCs OF IDENTIFICATION



Acute/subacute

- Altered mental status with change in attention

Behavioral disturbance

- (Restless, agitated, combative)

Changes in consciousness

- (Jittery, drowsy, difficult to arouse)

COMMON CAUSES OF DELIRIUM

- Sleep deprivation
- Dehydration
- Medications
- Pain
- Immobility

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Drowsiness or agitation
- Refusing therapy/meals/medications
- Arguing with staff or family members
- Hallucinating
- Wandering off

TREATING AND PREVENTING DELIRIUM

MODIFY ENVIRONMENT



- Orient often—time, date, place
- Provide calendar/clock in room
- Surround with familiar faces

PROMOTE NORMAL SLEEP



- Reduce noise, dim lights
- Promote sleep at night, activity during day

CORRECT SENSORY DEFICITS



- Eyeglasses
- Hearing aids
- Pain management
- Good lighting

ENHANCE DAYTIME ACTIVITIES



- Cognitive stimulation—word games, crossword puzzles, current events discussion
- Encourage physical therapy/occupational therapy
- Active while awake, only sleep at night
- MOBILIZE!

PREVENT DEHYDRATION



- Small sips of water throughout the day
- Encourage good nutrition—supplement if necessary with smoothies and protein drinks
- Address constipation