

11. REFERRAL GUIDE

REFERRAL GUIDE FOR WOMEN WITH PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

This referral guide may be used to assist in identifying the appropriate health care professional to assist woman with breast disease who are experiencing concerns and psychological disturbance. Many health care professionals involved in providing psychosocial care for women with breast disease have overlapping roles, so appropriate referral will depend on which health care professional will meet best the individual needs of the woman, and the services available at the time of need.

IDENTIFICATION OF ANXIETY & DEPRESSIVE STATES

Reference: Psychosocial Clinical Practice Guidelines, pp36-38.

Symptoms associated with anxiety

- Symptoms may include:
 - heightened physical arousal
 - sleep disturbance
 - impaired concentration & decision making
 - agitation
 - anger
 - avoidance of distressing issues & situations
 - excessive reassurance seeking.
- When problems become more severe (**& specialist treatment may be required**) symptoms may also include:
 - panic attacks
 - pervasive & generalised worry
 - treatment phobias, (eg. needle phobias)
 - social anxiety
 - post-traumatic stress reactions.

Symptoms associated with depression

- Symptoms may include:
 - low or flat mood
 - loss of interest in things that used to be enjoyable
 - anorexia, weight loss
 - insomnia, fatigue
 - reduced interest in sex.
- In patients with cancer the diagnosis of a major depressive episode is best evaluated by:
 - the severity of the depressed mood
 - loss of interest in pleasure
 - the degree of feeling of hopelessness, guilt & worthlessness
 - the presence of suicidal tendencies
 - recurrent tearfulness
 - social withdrawal, loss of motivation
 - unable to control negative feelings with domination of these feelings.

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