

HELPING ANXIOUS COVID PATIENTS

For the non-invasively ventilated patients, breathlessness is one symptom causing distress. It is also very scary as staff are in PPE and this limits facial expression and showing care and calm.

Here are some ideas to help:

- 1** Acknowledge that this feels scary for them, but that its okay you are here to help
- 2** Try moving the patients position to open up the lungs
 - a. Sitting more upright
 - b. Having more pillows if lying down
- 3** Breathing control techniques
 - a. Patients fight to get air in- ask them to take a big breath out and “sigh” first to “empty” their lungs
 - b. If you are starting to get the patient up and moving ask the patient to breathe in through their nose if they can. Use it with pursed-lips breathing
 - c. Try to slow breathing down to a steady pace using counting (not deep breathing). In...2...3....out...2...3
 - d. For patients on CPAP reassure the machine will help them and to work with it “let the breath breathe itself”
- 4** Try to stay calm yourself. If you are anxious and worked up its hard to calm others.

*Developed from ideas on www.brit-thoracic.org.uk and www.lunguk.org
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