Pain Scale Determination Process

If a person
- Yes can verbalize and
- Yes can self-report and
- Yes has intact cognitive abilities

Use a self-reporting validated pain intensity scale such as:
- 0-10 verbal or numeric
- verbal descriptor scale

If a person
- NO can’t verbalize but
- Yes can self-report and
- Yes has intact cognitive abilities

Use a self-reporting validated pain intensity scale such as:
- Faces Pain Scale - Revised
- Iowa Pain Thermometer

If a person
- can’t always verbalize and
- can’t always self-report and
- has fluctuating cognitive abilities

Use a validated behavioral pain scale such as:
- PAINAD
- a self-reporting pain scale that allows the person to describe the pain or point to an image

If a person
- NO can’t verbalize and
- NO can’t self-report and
- Yes has cognitive disabilities

Use a validated behavioral pain scale such as:
- PAINAD
- DS-DAT

Use the same scale for the same person each time he/she is assessed.

This process diagram was developed by DADS Quality Monitoring Program and DADS Media Services.

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