


**Connecting Older Adults with
Mental Health Services**

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**Connecting Older Adults with Mental
Health Services**

Objectives

- Explore the psychosocial challenges for older adults in need of treatment for depression
- Examine the risks associated with non-treatment of depression
- Provide resources for diagnosis and treatment planning



**So... "What exactly is
depression"?**

Depression is ...

- A mental illness that creates mood changes
- A medical illness that affects the mind and body
- Depression Impacts: feelings/thoughts/behaviors
- Depression can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems

"More than two million of the 34 million Americans age 65 and older suffer from some form of depression". (Mental Health America)

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition™ (DSM IV)

The manual that physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, and social workers use in order to diagnose mental illness

- A person must exhibit at least five or more characteristics and symptoms
- Symptoms must be evident for at least the last two weeks for that person to be diagnosed with this disorder

Symptoms of Depression

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Sleeping too much or too little; middle-of-night or early-morning waking
- Reduced appetite and weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain
- Loss of pleasure and interest in activities once enjoyed, including sex
- Irritability, restlessness
- Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment (such as chronic pain or digestive disorders)
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Characteristics of Late Life Depression

Often Confusing and Sometimes Difficult to Pinpoint

Persistent complaints may range from:

- pain
- headaches
- fatigue
- insomnia
- gastrointestinal symptoms
- arthritis
- multiple diffuse symptoms
- weight loss



Untreated Depression can lead to...

- Prolonged depressed mood
- Developing a disability
- Developing chronic symptoms of other illnesses
- Premature death
- Suicide



Risk factors for self and others are...

- Increase in demands on family and/ or caregivers
- Increased visits to primary care physician
- Increased dependence



Still More Treatment Barriers

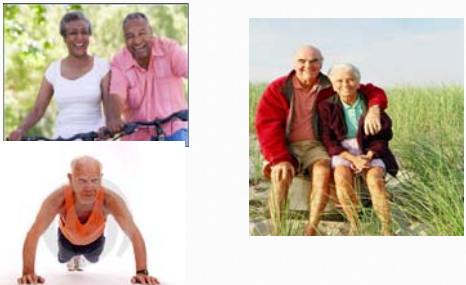
Psychosocial Impact	Forms of Resistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stigma of being mentally ill• Cultural isolation• Embarrassment• Shame• Guilt• Anger• Blame• Poor performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “What will people think?”• “ Oh, I’m just getting older”.• “I don’t want to take another medication”.• “I can handle this”.• “Nothing is wrong with me”.

“Just Snap Out of It”

Psychosocial Stressors

- (1) changes with primary support group (divorce)
- (2) changes with social environment (death of a friend)
- (3) educational needs
- (4) housing needs
- (5) economic needs
- (6) occupational difficulties
- (7) legal difficulties
- (8) transportation difficulties

The Golden Years



The Golden Years


Primary Support Needs

- Divorce
- Death of spouse or caregiver
- Sudden illness of loved one

"I never expected life to turn out like this".

Changes in Social Environment

- Death of friends
- Changes in neighborhood setting
- Changes in marital status



"I'm suddenly very lonely".

Educational Needs

- Personal safety and medication management
- The need to learn new skills
- Cognitive challenges

"I can't work anything anymore!"

Housing Needs

- Relocation
- Increased level of care
- Overwhelming responsibilities/demands
- Adult children returning home
- Assisted living adjustments
- Loss of privacy and independence

"I feel lost and out of control".

Economic Needs

- Fixed Income
- Increases in level of care
- Increases in medical costs

"I worry about making ends meet"

Occupational Needs

- Post retirement dilemma
- Limited opportunities
- Supplemental income

"I don't feel useful anymore"

Legal Needs

- Asset management
power of attorney for healthcare
power of attorney for finances
advanced directives
taxes
wills and trusts

"My husband used to make these decisions"

Transportation Needs

- Deciding to no longer drive can lead to:
social isolation, dependence, lack of stimulation
- Safety issues when driving
- Costs of securing transportation

"I would like to go, but I can't get there"

Through the lens of Depression
these factors may seem...

Insurmountable and Overwhelming
*But most older adults can be treated successfully and
improve their lives dramatically*



Transitions Senior Program
Benefits of Group Treatment

- Stabilization while managed by clinical team
- Social stimulation and interaction with peers
- Coping skills development
- Free transportation (25 mile radius)
- Free Family Support Group
- Free Alumni Support Group
- Case management and individual treatment planning
- Facilitated Family meetings
- Referrals and resources

Metro-Atlanta Aging and Mental
Health Services

- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- Age wise Connection
- Fuqua Center for Late Life Depression
- Georgia Division on Aging Services
- Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities
- Mental Health America of Georgia
- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Georgia
- Peachford Behavioral Health System
- Ridgeview Institute
- Emory eastside Hospital- Heritage Center
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

References

- 1-Mental Health America: "Fact Sheet :Depression in Older Adults ." Accessed March 2010, Explorer: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/infomation/get-info/depression/depression-in-older-adults>
- 2- MayoClinic .com. "Depression" (major depression). Accessed February 2010. Explorer: <http://www.MayoClinic.com/health/depressionandexercise/MH00043>
- 3- Fuqua center for Late Life Depression: Older Adults and Families: "What is Late Life Depression?". Accessed March 2010. Explorer: <http://www.fuquacenter.org/depression>
- 4-Mental Health America: "Fact Sheet :Depression in Older Adults ." Accessed March 2010, Explorer: <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/infomation/get-info/depression/depression-in-older-adults>
- 5-Geriatric Mental Health foundation. "Late Life Depression fact sheet. Accessed March 2010 Explorer:http://www.gmhfonline.org/gmhf/consumer/factsheets/depression_factsheet.html

Thanks for attending!

Any Questions?
