Who’s taking care of Mom?

Mental Health in Older Adults
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STORY

- Ida
- 79 years old
- Depression
Depression in Older Adults

- 6.5 million Americans over the age of 65
- Includes first onset and those with a depression history
- Creates distress for both individual and family
- More common in those with other medical problems
Depression in Older Adults

- Can go untreated
- Symptoms mimic other medical conditions
- Myth “normal part of aging”
- Shame of asking for help
What does depression look like?

- Memory problems/confusion
- Irritability
- Sleep changes
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of appetite/weight loss
- Vague complaints of pain

- How is this different from the general population?
What makes depression in older adults different

- Persistent and/or vague complaints
- Moving more slowly
- Demanding behavior
- Help-seeking
Grief or Depression?

**GRIEF**
- Major life change
- Temporary

**DEPRESSION**
- Lasts much longer
- Unresolved symptoms can present as physical symptoms
Causes of Depression

- No single answer
- Hereditary component
- Prolonged stress, illness, extended grief
- Substance abuse/misuse
- Combination of life changes, isolation, loneliness, decreased independence, and medical illness
What are common treatments?

• Medication and/or talk therapy; or both
• Avoid Anticholinergic medications
• Stay active
• Talk therapy:
  o Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  o Problem Solving Therapy
  o Solution Focused
Barriers to Care

- Transportation
- Family Support
- Conflicting medical appointments
- Cost if insurance does not cover
You can help

• Get involved with your loved one’s care
• Make sure you/your loved one is getting screened
• Prognosis is good
• Support community organizations that offer activities for seniors
• Offer assistance with transportation
• Reduce your own stigma/stereotypes about depression
• Invite older adults to be a part of activities
• Take care of yourself
Thank you!

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