

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:
 - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
 - Problem Solving Therapy
 - 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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