

MENTAL HEALTH AND OLDER ADULTS

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OBJECTIVE OF THE CLASS

- To gain an understanding of mental health challenges as they pertain to the provision of care to older adults.

GIVE ME THE FACTS...

- Approximately 15% of adults (60 and older) live with a mental health disorder—World Health Organization
- Stigma contributes to undiagnosed, untreated seniors
 - Stigma around "mental illness"
 - Stigma around treatment
- Anxiety and depression are the most common disorders
- In Oregon, suicide rate is 33% higher than the US average (OHA/CDC, 2018)

FACTORS THAT IMPACT MENTAL HEALTH

- Medications
- Physical Health
- Chronic Pain
- Substance Use
- Support System
- Community Stigma
- Individual/Family Outlook
- Social Activities/Loneliness
- Changing in housing
- Access to care

DEPRESSION

- Depression is a Mood Disorder that causes mild to severe impairment in daily functioning for a period of 2 weeks or longer.
- Common symptoms include:
 - Persistent sadness
 - Loss of interest in activities
 - Weight loss or gain
 - Increased or decreased sleep
 - Irritability
 - Confusion/disorientation/lack of concentration
 - Vague complaints of physical pain or discomfort
 - Social withdrawal or isolation
 - Lack of personal hygiene

DEPRESSION

- Encourage the individual to see their doctor for:
 - Medication Evaluation
 - Cognitive Assessment
 - Physical Evaluation to rule out health condition
 - Medication management and possible behavioral interventions.
- Encourage social activity (talks at the senior center/library, teaching them how to use technology to increase communication with family members, helping schedule visits with family and friends).
- Physical activity (taking walks, attending an exercise class)
- Improving consistency throughout the day. (Eating at the same time, regular sleep schedules)
- Ask questions about chronic pain and sleeping patterns. Ask for details about the frequency, intensity, duration and impact of their symptoms
- Be a supportive listener, approach situations with cultural sensitivity

SUICIDALITY

- **Normal Aging Process** versus **A Safety Concern**

Things we may hear our clients say:

“I’m not going to be around much longer”

“I’m ready to pass on”

- Misconception: Talking about Suicide with someone increases the chances of a crisis
 - Don’t shy away from the conversation. Ask questions.
- Red Flags
 - New diagnosis, chronic pain, not complying with treatment recommendations, missing appointments

SUICIDALITY

Mandatory Reporters

- Don't leave the individual alone.
- Resources:
 - Suicide Prevention Hotlines
 - Local Crisis Hotlines
 - 911
 - Adult Protective Services
 - Local Behavioral Health Agencies

ANXIETY

- There are several types of anxiety disorders: Generalized Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Panic Disorders, Phobias, Agoraphobia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Often older adults don't recognize their symptoms as anxiety.
- Common symptoms:
 - Somatic complaint component: stomach aches, headaches, tense shoulders/neck, heart burn
 - Difficulties concentrating
 - Persistent worrying
 - Sleep disturbance
 - Irritability
 - Racing thoughts
 - Hoarding

ANXIETY

- Don't tell the individual: "Don't worry about it."
- Encourage the person to seek assistance from their doctor. Medication may be part of the solution. Consider counseling.
- Exercise is very important.
- Encourage journaling
- Ask questions about their sleeping patterns.
- Encourage him or her to practice self-care. Ask what this looks like and help schedule in time to allow self-care to occur.

LESS COMMON DISORDERS

- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- One symptom to look out for are auditory/visual hallucinations. If the client is experiencing hallucinations for the first time, it can often be an indicator that something serious could be occurring.

RESOURCES

- Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-8255
- Washington County Mental Health Crisis Line 503-291-9111
- Hawthorn Walk In Center 503-846-4555
- Multnomah County Crisis Line 503-988-4888
- Clackamas County Crisis Line 503-655-8585
- Veterans Crisis Hotline 1-800-273-8255, Press 1
- Senior Loneliness Line 503-200-1633
- Adult Protective Services-Washington County 971-673-5200
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)--by county www.namior.org

QUESTIONS

- Thank you for your time today.
- Questions?