

Show Me Summit on Aging and Health 2024

Presentation Title: Depression in Older Adults -  
What you need to know?

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**PURPOSE OF THIS PRESENTATION**

- Increase awareness about depression in older adults
- Know the warning signs of depression
- Learn when and how to seek help
- Know various treatment options for depression

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**CONSIDER THIS.....**

Bella is a 78 years old healthy female suddenly lost her husband of 45 years, Bob, due to heart disease three months ago. Bella struggles to accept the reality of Bob's death. Her daughter, Janice, visited Bella at her house and during their conversation Bella tells Janice "my life is empty and meaningless without Bob". Since Bob's death Bella hasn't been attending her church, stopped answering phone calls from friends and over past three months lost 10 lbs weight. Bella admits she could not stop thinking about Bob and tells Janice how much she miss Bob.

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**CONSIDER THIS.....**

Over the next six months Bella experiences low mood, loss of interest in life, starts thinking about death and suicide. She continues to lose weight and is now experiencing difficulties with sleep. She quite often wakes up in the middle of the night calling out "Bob, Bob". Bella starts blaming herself for Bob's death and feels life is not worth living anymore. She keeps forgetting to pay her bills on time, doesn't keep her house clean and tells her daughter she "just don't have energy to do the dishes".

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**CONSIDER THIS.....**

Depression is not a normal part of growing older

It is important to know the difference between grief and depression

Depression is not just having "the blues" or the emotions we feel when grieving the loss of a loved one.

It is a true medical condition **that is treatable**, like diabetes or hypertension.

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**What is depression?**

Feeling down every once in a while is a normal part of life, but if these feelings last a few weeks or months, you may have depression.

Depression is a **serious mood disorder**. It can affect the way you feel, act, and think. Depression is a common problem among older adults, but clinical depression is not a normal part of aging. In fact, studies show that most older adults feel satisfied with their lives, despite having more illnesses or physical problems than younger people. However, **if you've experienced depression as a younger person, you may be more likely to have depression as an older adult.**

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**How do I know if it's Depression?**

- Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness and/or helplessness
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details and making decisions
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping
- Overeating or appetite loss
- Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not get better, even with treatment

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**How is depression different for older adults?**

- Older adults are at increased risk.
- Depression is more common in people who also have other illnesses (such as heart disease or cancer) or whose function becomes limited.
- Older adults often perceive symptoms of depression as just a natural reaction to illness or the life changes that may occur as we age, and therefore not see the depression as something to be treated.
- Older adults don't understand that they could feel better with appropriate treatment.

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**How Many Older Adults are Depressed?**

- The good news is that a majority of older adults are not depressed.
- The CDC estimates that between 1% - 5% of older people living in the community suffer from depression
- If the person is older and receiving home health care it could be as high as 13.5 %
- If the person is hospitalized it is at 11.5%

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**How do I Find Help?**

Most older adults see an improvement in their symptoms when treated with antidepressant drugs, psychotherapy, or a combination of both.

If you are concerned about a loved one being depressed, offer to go with him or her to see a health care provider to be diagnosed and treated.

If you or someone you care about is in crisis, please seek help immediately.

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**How do I Find Help?**



Call 911

Visit a nearby emergency department or your health care provider's office

Call the toll-free, 24-hour hotline of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 to talk to a trained counselor

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**Audience Poll**

QUESTION: Is depression more common in older adults than in younger adults?

- Yes
- No

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**Audience Poll**

QUESTION: Is depression more common in older adults than in younger adults?

- Yes
- No

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**TAKE HOME MESSAGE**

Depression is serious, and treatments are available to help.

For most people, depression gets better with treatment.

Counseling, medicine, or other forms of treatment can help. You do not need to suffer — help and treatment options are available.

Talk with your doctor if you think you might have depression.

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**TAKE HOME MESSAGE**

If you are thinking about harming yourself, tell someone who can help immediately.

Do not isolate yourself.

Call a trusted family member or friend.

Call 988 or go to a hospital emergency room to get immediate help.

Make an appointment with your doctor.

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**4 Things To Know About Depression & Older Adults**

Depression is a common problem among older adults, but it is not a normal part of aging. It can affect the way you feel, act, and think.

- 1 Depression can be treated.**  
It's important to seek help early on.
- 2 Signs and symptoms of depression vary.**  
For some older adults with depression, sadness may not be their main symptom.
- 3 Friends and family can help offer support.**  
They can help watch for symptoms and encourage treatment.
- 4 Living a healthy lifestyle can help reduce feelings of depression.**  
This may include eating a balanced diet and being physically active.

To learn more, visit [www.nia.nih.gov/depression](http://www.nia.nih.gov/depression).




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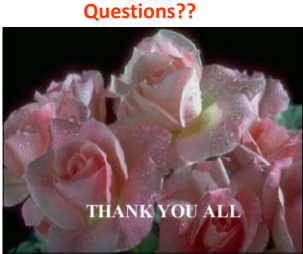
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