

Helpful Hints For Promoting Good Emotional Wellness

The aging process impacts both the mind and body in many ways. The following lifestyle habits can make a difference in promoting emotional wellness.

- Build a strong community of support by staying in contact with friends and family.
- Establish a regular exercise program to enhance physical and emotional strength.
- Eat a balanced diet. Good nutrition is extremely important to physical and emotional health.
- Get involved in activities that keep you interested and occupied.
- Learn about hormonal and other physical changes that naturally occur in your body and can impact mental health.
- Learn how your medications interact with one another and how these interactions can impact your mental health. Some medications may cause symptoms that mimic mental illness.

If you experience changes in your emotional health, contact a physician or local mental health center and learn about the options available for help. As an aging adult you can experience a healthy and full life.

Resources

Treatment and Information Community Mental Health Centers

MISSOURI

Comprehensive Mental Health Services, Inc.
10901 Winner Road
Independence, MO 64052
816-254-3652
www.thecmhs.com

ReDiscover

901 NE Independence
Lee's Summit, MO 64086
816-246-8000

TMC Behavioral Health

300 W. 19th Terrace
Kansas City, MO 64108
816-467-1400
www.trumed.org

Swope Health Services

3801 Blue Parkway
Kansas City, MO 64130
816-923-5800
www.swopeparkway.org

Tri County Mental Health Services

3100 NE 83rd Street
Kansas City, MO 64119
816-468-0400

KANSAS

Johnson County Mental Health Center
6000 Lamar, Suite 130
Mission, KS 66202
913-831-2550
<http://mentalhealth.jocogov.org>

Wyandot Centers

3615 Eaton Street
Kansas City, KS 66103
913-831-9500
www.kumc.edu/wmhc

Mental Health America of the Heartland

739 Minnesota Ave.
Kansas City, KS 66101
913-281-2221
HelpLine 913-281-1234

Aging and Emotional Wellness



Aging and Emotional Wellness

Senior adults are living longer and more productive lives. Yet as we move through life, many people are faced with various physical, mental and emotional challenges. Maintaining good mental and emotional health is important as aging continues. If you see changes in your thinking, behavior, or in the way you feel emotionally, see your physician or your mental health provider to help discover the cause and treatment for such changes.

Did you know?

- At least two-thirds of nursing home residents have a diagnosis of a mental disorder such as major depression.
- Senior adults with symptoms of depression have roughly 50 percent higher healthcare costs than non-depressed seniors.
- Approximately 68 percent of adults aged 65 and older are unfamiliar with depression, even though more than two million suffer from the disease.
- About 58 percent of people aged 65 and older believe that it is normal for people to get depressed as they grow older.
- One-third of widows/widowers meet criteria for depression in the first month after the death of their spouses and half of these individuals remain clinically depressed after one year.

- While comprising only 13 percent of the population, individuals aged 65 and older account for 20 percent of all suicide deaths.

Symptoms of Mental Illness

When emotions or behavior seem to interfere with relationships, activities of daily living, a sense of well being, an ability to make decisions or deal with day to day problems, it is important to get an accurate diagnosis.

Warning signs of a mental illness include:

- Physical complaints that do not respond to treatment
- Cutting back social interaction, self-care, and grooming
- Breaking medical regimens
- Agitation/Restlessness
- Sleep Disturbances
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- Lack of energy or interest in activities that are usually found enjoyable
- Thoughts of suicide
- Anxiety or depression after major life events such as death of a spouse, divorce or major personal injury or illness

Grief

The loss of something or someone important evokes a natural emotional and behavioral response called grief. Grief is a normal reaction to loss. Many life events, such as the loss of a partner, financial trouble or decline in health, can trigger grief.

Despite individual variations in the emotions, intensity and length of the grieving process, there are some very common reactions.

Symptoms of grief may mimic those of depression and may include sleep problems, appetite loss and weight loss. Grieving individuals go through the following phases:

- Shock: You may feel numb or have a sense of disbelief.
- Pain: Feelings of shock decline, while sadness, loneliness and depression intensify.
- Healing, reorganization and integration: Sadness and disbelief may persist, but you gradually develop renewed interest in work, home and life in general.

If symptoms persist, you should seek medical or professional help.

Depression

Depression in senior adults often goes undiagnosed and untreated. Untreated depression can lead to physical illness, relationship problems and suicide.

In senior adults, the condition has several unique and unusual characteristics. Factors that may be involved in depression include:

- Other illnesses
- Medications
- Sudden difficulty with thinking, concentrating and remembering
- Increased physical complaints
- Personal losses
- Substance abuse