

>>> Passages <<<

Mindful Connections



MENTAL HEALTH IN OLDER ADULTS



Our newsletter aims to raise awareness around the various mental health concerns affecting older adults aged 60 and above. By exploring a diverse range of mental health topics and providing resources, we hope to offer invaluable support to those grappling with such issues.

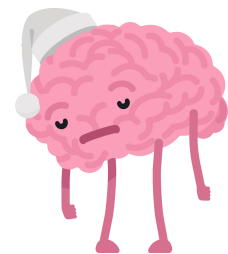
Approaching the holiday season, we are reminded of the importance of connecting with loved ones, cherishing their company, and raising our spirits. However, for many individuals, this period can be challenging. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), over half of individuals with mental illnesses experience heightened difficulties during the holidays, worsening their conditions.

Additionally, some individuals may experience seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of depression that usually affects individuals during specific seasons, primarily fall and winter. This condition is mainly caused by reduced daylight, leading to an overproduction of melatonin, a hormone linked to sleep.

➤➤➤ Although SAD can affect anyone, older adults can be particularly susceptible. It's imperative to recognize the older adult population's vulnerability to isolation and loneliness, which can exacerbate the symptoms of SAD. Challenges such as limited social opportunities post-retirement, restricted mobility, and health concerns can make it difficult to participate in activities outside the home.

It's critical to identify the following common signs of SAD among older adults:

- Continuous feelings of sadness, guilt, or hopelessness
- Loss of interest in activities that were previously enjoyed
- Fatigue, sluggishness, or difficulty concentrating
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Restlessness, irritability, or agitation
- Changes in appetite or weight



While some of these symptoms may overlap with other health conditions, obtaining a medical diagnosis through consultation with a mental health professional is crucial.

Thankfully, SAD is treatable, and several options are available, including:

- Light therapy: using a lightbox to simulate sunlight exposure to regulate the circadian rhythm.
- Psychotherapy: speaking with a therapist or counselor to develop new ways of thinking, behaviors, and habits that can alleviate depression.
- Medication: antidepressants can help regulate chemicals involved in mood or stress.
- Vitamin D: individuals with SAD often have a vitamin D deficiency, and supplementing with vitamin D can improve symptoms.



>>> PRIORITIZE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH <<<

Self-care: The practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health.

- The practice of taking an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, in particular during periods of stress.

Self-care is limitless. It comes down to the quality, intention, and proactiveness of the action. Below are some suggestions to maintain good mental health during the holiday season.



Write a gratitude list and offer thanks



Get enough sleep



Exercise



Seek medical attention



Eat healthy, well-balanced meals



Volunteer

»»» ACTION BEFORE MOTIVATION «««

Action leads to motivation, not the other way around. Any action is better than no action at all. Stop waiting for motivation, and start motivating yourself.

Healthy IDEAS

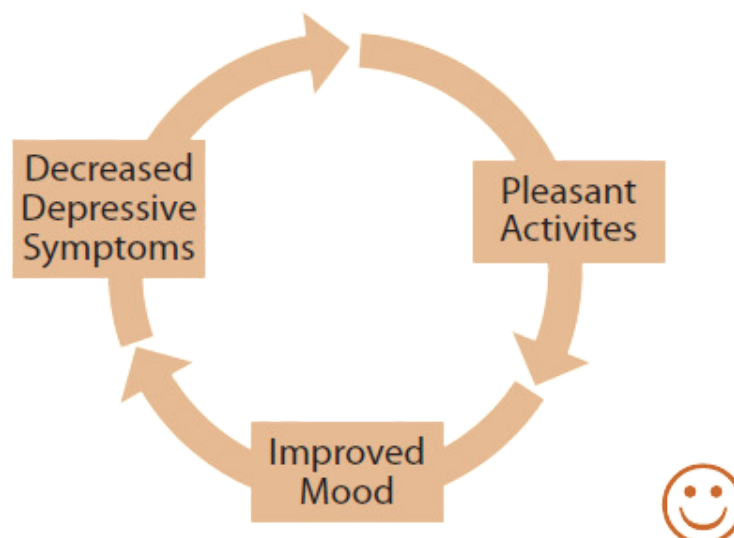
Connections presents Healthy IDEAS (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors), an evidence-based program for older adults that integrates depression awareness and management into case management services.

Here's how it works:

Screening and assessment for depression
Education on depression and treatment
Referral and linkage to treatment
Behavioral Activation

Disclaimer: We are not diagnosing or providing treatment for depression.

Better Mood and
Fewer Depressive Symptoms



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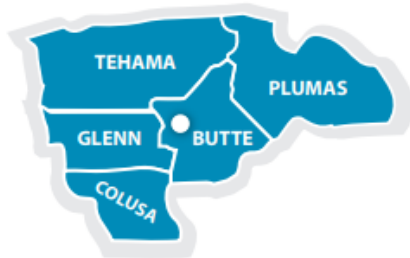
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