

# Eight Facts About Mental Health and Aging

- 1. Mental illness is not a normal part of aging.**
  - While older adults may experience many losses, deep sadness that lingers may signal clinical depression. Similarly, an anxiety disorder is different from normal worries.
- 2. Mental health is as important as physical health.**
  - Untreated mental disorders in older adults can lead to diminished functioning, substance abuse, and increased mortality.
- 3. Misdiagnosis and avoidance are common.**
  - Unfortunately, primary care physicians fail to diagnose depression 50 percent of the time. Other disorders are identified even less often.
- 4. Older adults have specific mental health care needs.**
  - Changing bodies and chemistry, different presentations of symptoms, changes in family, friendships and in living situations, and different responses to medications all need to be considered in treatment.
- 5. Suicide is a risk among older adults.**
  - Older adults have one of the highest suicide rates in the country. Those aged 75 and above have highest suicide rate in that age group.
- 6. These symptoms call for consultation with a healthcare professional:**
  - Sadness that has lasted longer than two weeks.
  - Consistent worries about issues such as money, family, and health.
  - Consistent trouble sleeping or concentrating.
  - Frequent trouble remembering things or feeling confused in familiar places.
  - Having more than one alcoholic drink a day or taking more/less medication than prescribed.
- 7. Older adults with mental illness can be helped with the same success as younger people.**
  - Over 80 percent of older adults recovered from depression after receiving treatment that included both psychotherapy and anti-depressant medication.
- 8. Our healthcare system is not adequately helping older adults with mental disorders.**
  - Medicare and most private health insurance plans discriminate against mental illness. For example, Medicare covers 80 percent of a physical health cost but only 55 to 60 percent of a mental health cost. This is a significant barrier to treatment.

*Life can still be beautiful...*

## Senior Mental Health Services

### Specialized outpatient services include:

- Comprehensive diagnostic assessment
- Psychotherapy (individual, family, group)
- Senior Day Treatment

### Available to program clients only:

- Psychological testing
- Psychiatric evaluation
- Medication management

### Community education:

Specialized training and workshops on mental health issues of older adults are available.

### Program features include:

- Senior specific (ages 55+)
- Provided in homes and community sites (where seniors live and congregate)
- Available in Hennepin, Ramsey, and parts of Anoka county
- Provided by multi-disciplinary licensed staff with dual competencies in mental health and geriatrics
- Covered by Medicare, Medical Assistance, and most health plans for seniors

**For more information call:  
763-225-4054**

This program is part of the Senior Services and the Mental Health Clinics of:



**MINNESOTA**