

DEPRESSION & STRESS

OLDER ADULT MENTAL HEALTH

Depression is a common problem among older adults, but it is not a normal part of aging.

As a person ages, the more likelihood of dealing with health issues increases, and this added stress can lead to depression. An older adult is more likely to experience loneliness as they may suddenly find themselves living alone, due to a death in the family, or may become isolated because of decreased mobility from illness or loss of driving privileges.

Some older adults experience a reduced sense of purpose or loss of identity after retirement. Other factors that may contribute to an older adult becoming depressed include fear of death or dying and anxiety over financial problems. Medications can also cause symptoms of depression.

Symptoms include anger, irritability, sadness, loss of interest in activities, hopelessness, withdrawal from family and friends, trouble concentrating and making decisions, sleep problems, or changes in weight.

Depression is a real, medical illness that can be successfully treated with therapy, medication, or a combination of both. Support from family and friends plays an important role as well.



Stress is the body's natural reaction to tension, pressure, and change. As our body's age, coping with stress isn't as easy anymore.

It may be harder to bounce back physically from the toll the stress response takes. Additionally, many older adults do not sleep as well as they previously did, and the lack of sleep also contributes to the brain's ability to recover.

Stressors that tend to affect seniors are the loss of a loved one; too much unstructured time on your hands; change in relationships with children; or loss of physical abilities, such as vision, hearing, balance, or mobility.

Symptoms of stress may include tension headaches, indigestion, heart palpitations, poor concentration, sleep difficulties, anxiety, irritability, crying, or overeating.

Ways to Manage Stress & Depression

- Accept you can't control every situation
- Divide tasks into smaller, manageable ones
- Look for humor in life, laugh!
- Eat healthy, get enough sleep
- Take care of a pet
- Volunteer your time
- Learn a new skill
- Practice deep breathing: Take in a slow breath through your nose & count to 5. Hold it for 5 counts. Exhale through your mouth to the count of 5.



Call your healthcare provider if your feelings overwhelm you for several days in a row.

Concerned for yourself or a loved one?

Take a free, anonymous mental health screening:
www.mental-health-recovery.org

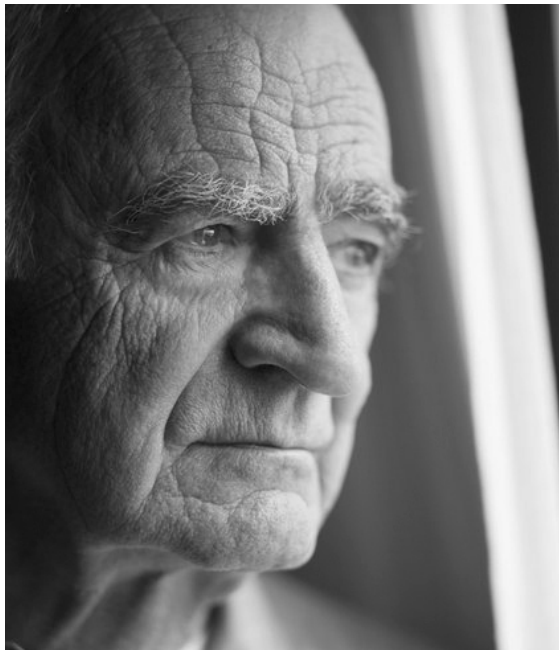
Contact a Portage County mental health provider:

Coleman Professional Services at 330-673-1347
Family & Community Services at 330-677-4124



Portage Helpline:
330-678-4357

Struggling, need to talk?
Call anytime!



I don't want to live anymore.
You'd be better off without me.
I will never feel any better.

What About Suicide?

There's no single cause for suicide. Suicide most often occurs when stressors exceed current coping abilities of someone suffering from a mental health condition. Depression is the most common condition associated with suicide, and it is often undiagnosed or untreated. Conditions like depression, anxiety and substance problems, especially when unaddressed, increase risk for suicide.

Risk Factors for Suicide

- Depression
- Having a drug and/or alcohol problem
- Significant loss by death, separation, divorce, moving or relationship break-up
- Social isolation
- History of abuse/neglect
- Family history of suicide
- Access to firearms

How you can help

Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Depression is a treatable disorder. A depressed person is in emotional pain, and cannot think clearly about the morality of suicide, cannot think logically about their value to friends and family. Ask questions to help a depressed and suicidal person.

“You seem pretty down. Do things seem hopeless to you? Are you having thoughts that it would be easier to be dead? Are you thinking about suicide?”

You cannot make someone suicidal by talking about it. It is helpful to show the person you take them seriously and you care. Most people feel relieved to have a chance to talk. If you get a “yes” answer, don't panic. Stay with them until they get help - by calling a hotline or going to a doctor.

In 2014, the highest suicide rate (19.3) was among people 85 years or older.



Crisis Helpline:
330-296-3555 or 330-678-4357

Call anytime if you are concerned for yourself or a loved one in a mental health crisis.

Portage County Treatment & Services

Treatment begins with a call or visit to the following local agencies.

Coleman Professional Services
5982 Rhodes Rd, Kent
330-673-1347

Family & Community Services
143 Gougler Ave, Kent
330-677-4124