

Caregiver Resources - Depression

Overview

Depression is not just “feeling blue” or “down in the dumps.” It is not just being sad after a loss. It is not a normal part of aging. It is not caused by weakness, laziness or lack of willpower ⁽¹⁾.

Depression is a medical illness – just like diabetes, high blood pressure or heart disease – that requires attention. Depression can affect a person’s thoughts, feelings, physical health and behaviours ⁽²⁾. Approximately 5% to 10% of seniors living in the community will experience a depressive condition that requires treatment ⁽³⁾. While about 35% of older adults in institutions, like a retirement home, experience anxiety and depression ⁽³⁾.

Over 80% of people with depression respond well to treatment and achieve a complete and lasting recovery ⁽²⁾. However, for about 90% of people with depression, their condition will be missed or ignored, which prevents them from receiving treatment ⁽³⁾. The longer treatment of depression is delayed, the more difficult it is to manage ⁽³⁾.

Many older adults spend more and more time alone due to changes in the family dynamic, sickness and death of loved ones and other life changes ⁽³⁾. It is important to ensure older adults do not lose touch with their sources of support and connection because social behaviours improve physical and emotional health, and quality of life ⁽³⁾.

Additionally, following a balanced diet, caring for a pet and keeping a positive attitude are effective in maintaining mental wellness ⁽³⁾.

Do not hesitate to ask for help if needed.

References

- (1) The College of Family Physicians of Canada. (2010). *Depression - You don't have to feel this way*. Retrieved from <http://www.cfpc.ca/ProjectAssets/Templates/Resource.aspx?id=3707>
- (2) Robinson, L., Segal, J., & Smith, M. (2018). *Depression in older adults*. Retrieved from <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/depression-in-older-adults.htm>
- (3) Mood Disorders Society of Canada. (2010). *Depression in elderly*. Retrieved from <https://mdsc.ca/documents/Consumer%20and%20Family%20Support/Depression%20in%20Elderly%20edited%20Dec16%202010.pdf>