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Understanding older adults and their mental health

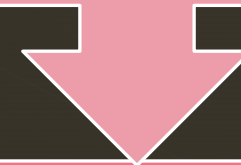
Statistics

Lengthening of average life span

47 years in 1900, 75 yrs in mid-1990s, 79 yrs in 2024



Almost 20% of the greater than fifty age group experience specific mental disorders not part of normal aging



Unrecognized or untreated mental illness can be severely impairing or even fatal

Culture of the Older Adult

- ▶ WWI, WWII
- ▶ Depression years
- ▶ No technology
- ▶ No abuse prevention
- ▶ Family dynamics
- ▶ Prejudices



What makes them so Challenging?

- Biologic Issues
 - Slowed down metabolism
 - Laboratory abnormalities
 - Multiple medications
 - Drug/drug interactions





Sensory deficits

- Taste: appetite
- Smell: appetite
- Touch: arthritis
- Hearing: hearing aides
- Vision: glasses

What makes older adults different?



- Phase of life Issues-

- Reminiscing
- Grieving
- Putting in order
- Accepting fate
- Increased spirituality

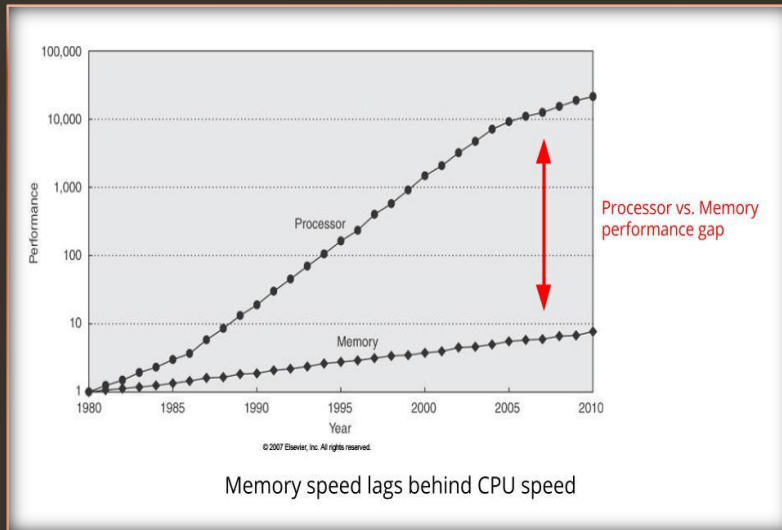
What Makes Older Adults Unique?

- Multiple Losses
 - Family and Friends
 - Independence
 - Autonomy
 - Possessions
 - Bodily functions
 - Privacy



Cognitive processing

A hallmark of cognitive aging is slowed processing speed, or a decrease in the rate at which people perform perceptual, motor, and decision making tasks



Frontier in Human Neuroscience

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fneuro.09.010.2010>

Cognitive
processing

Getting
overwhelmed

Inability to
multitask

Communicating with an older adult

- Slowed processing
- Difficulty discussing multiple topics at once
- Repetition of information, due to memory problems





Cognitive Processing

- Too much information
 - Junk mail
 - Insurance information

There is a need to

Simplify

What does this mean?

Short sentences

Eliminate extra-
words and things

Organization

Do not get rid of
everything!

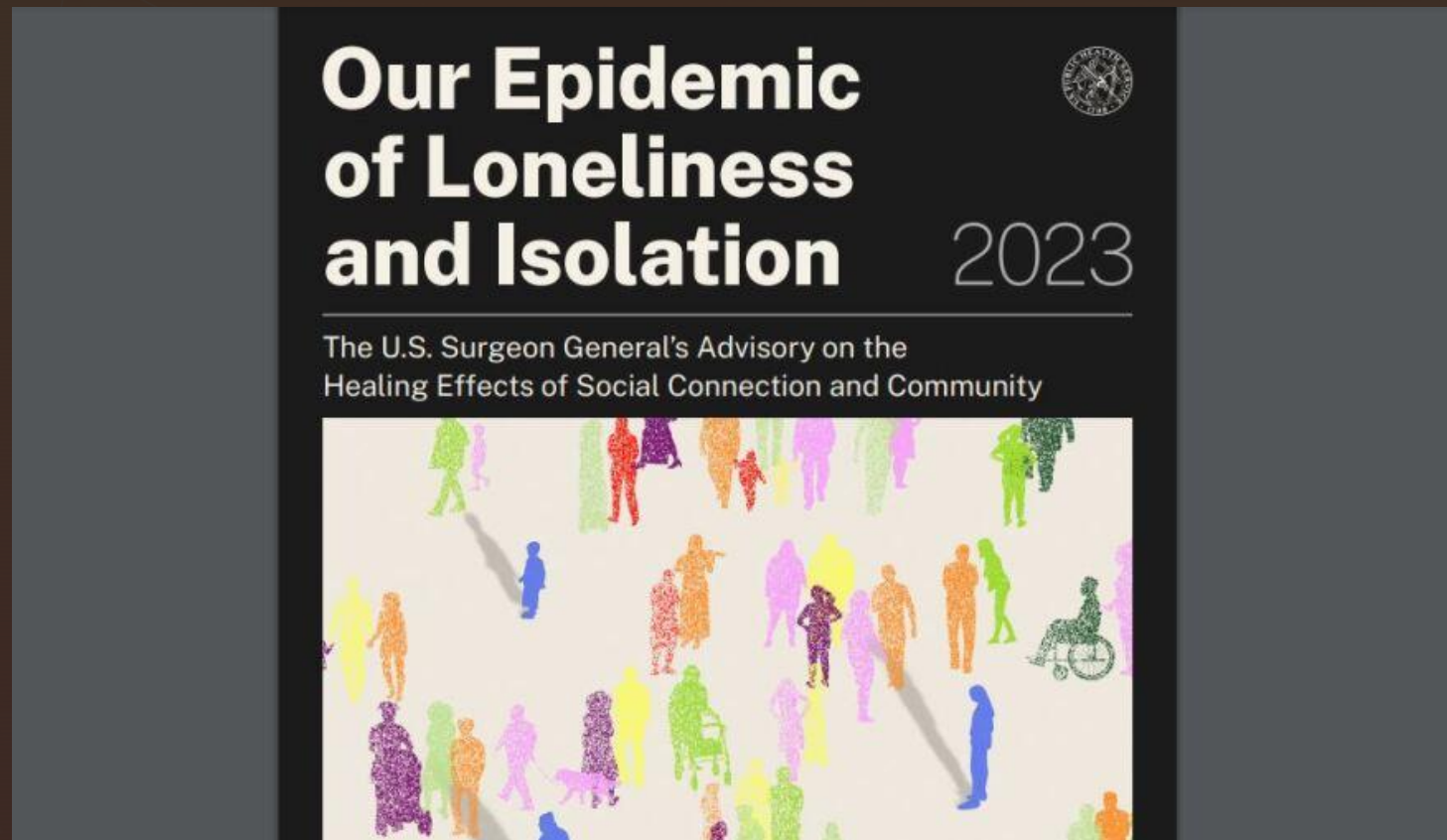


Printable Clothing Organization Labels

Isolation

- From multiple losses
- Due to paranoia
- Due to embarrassment
- Physical limitations
- Loss of transportation

Isolation and Loneliness- An Epidemic



Loneliness raises the
risk of early death by

25%

It's as deadly as smoking
15 cigarettes a day
—worse than obesity.

Source: WHO 2018

Did you know?

3 out of 5

Americans consider themselves lonely²



Social isolation and loneliness lead to higher risks for:³

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Obesity
- Weakened immune system
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Cognitive decline
- Alzheimer's disease
- Death

Medicare spends an additional

\$134

on socially isolated individuals⁴



Lonely people are **27%** more likely to use skilled nursing facilities, and their monthly costs are **\$75 higher⁴**

Loneliness can also increase care utilization⁵



68%

higher hospitalization

57%

higher ER visits



1 A Loneliness Epidemic

Specifically, social isolation is associated with increased risks:



50% increased risk of **dementia**



29% increased risk of **heart disease**



32% increased risk of **stroke**



Loneliness was associated with higher rates of **depression, anxiety, and suicide**.



68% increased risk of **hospitalization**

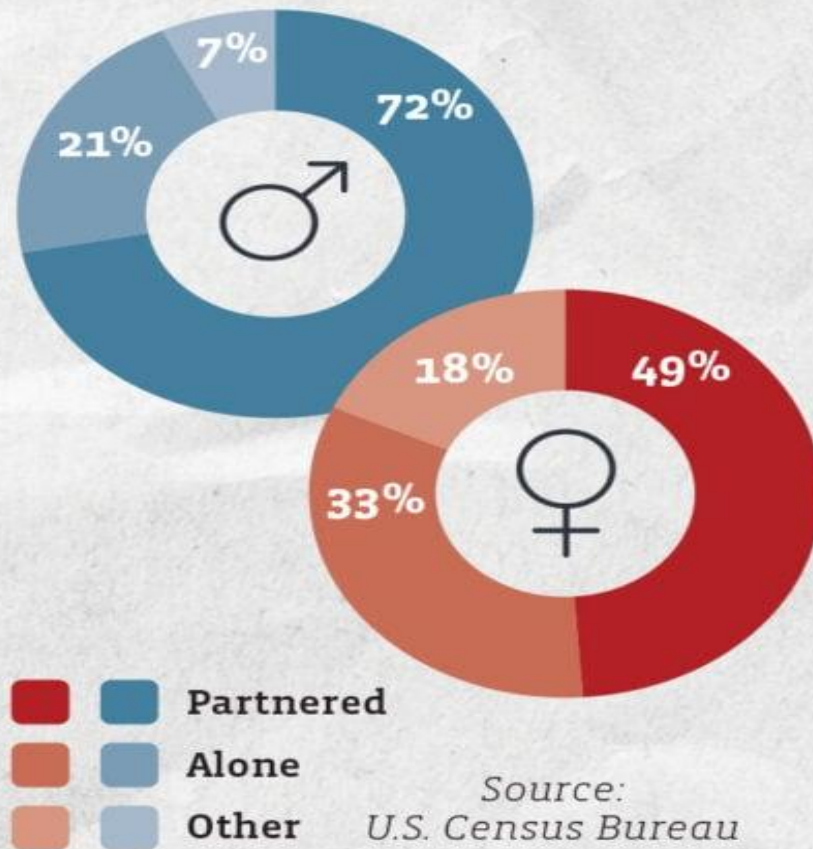


57% increased risk of **emergency visits**



Immigrant and **LGBTQ** people experience **loneliness** more than other groups.

Living arrangements of persons age 65 and older



More than a quarter of Americans age 60 and up live alone, compared to about 16% of older people in other nations.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF INTERGENERATIONAL PRACTICE?



Decreased
ageism



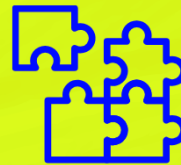
Better
physical health



Better
mental health



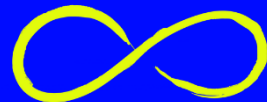
Stronger social
connections



Developing
new skills



Improved
well-being



GLOBAL
CAMPAIGN
TO COMBAT
AGEISM

#AWORLD4ALLAGES

Mental illnesses in the older adult

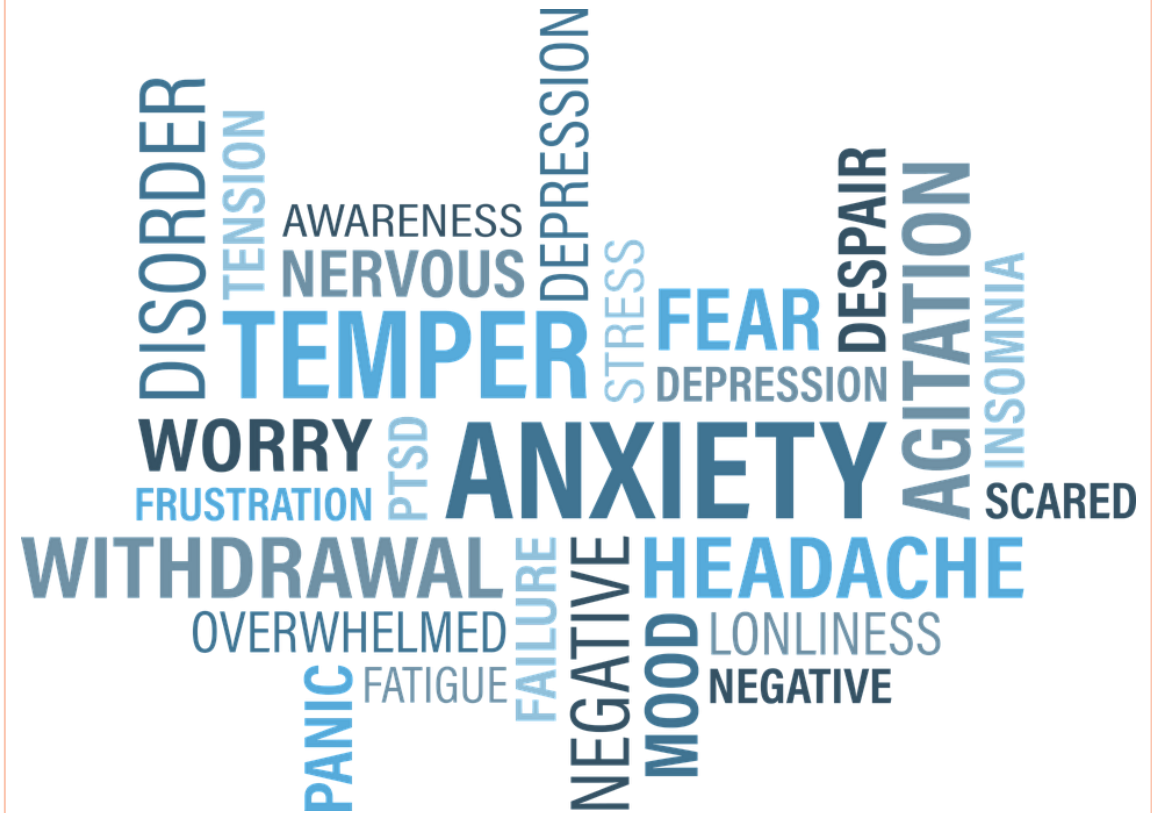
- Late onset
 - Dementia
 - Geriatric depression
 - Delirium
- Early adult start, and throughout life
 - Schizophrenia
 - Bipolar disorder
 - Obsessive compulsive disorder

Development of symptoms

Increase in anxiety

Feelings of depression

Increased
confusion



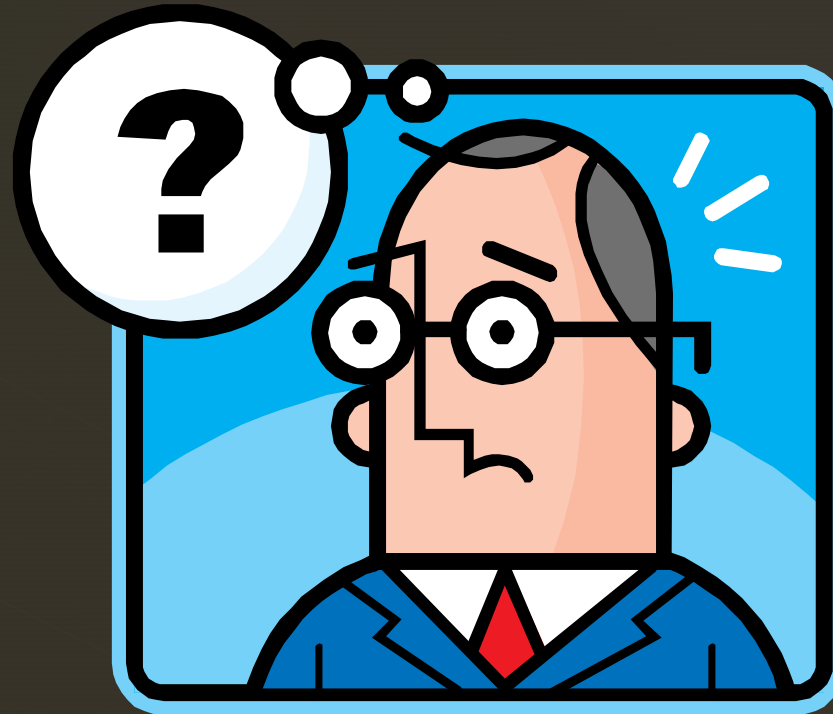
Memory Complaints

- 50-80% of older adults complain of memory problems
- These complaints are usually a product of depression



Definition of Dementia

- Slow, gradual loss of mental abilities
- Changes in
 - Memory
 - Personality
 - Behavior
 - Thinking Abilities



Signs of dementia

withdrawal

low energy

hostile feelings

loss of interest

mistrust of others

Signs of Depression in the elderly

Lack of pleasure in activities

Somatization

Sleep problems –middle and late
maintenance

Change in appetite

Loss of concentration, attention

Noted memory problems

Substance Abuse disorder

- The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) defines addiction as a disease affecting brain chemistry and circuitry, which then leads to compulsive drug-seeking and using behaviors

Substance abuse disorders

Frequently abused:

Alcohol

Opiates- Pain

Stimulants -ADHD

Benzodiazepines - Anxiety

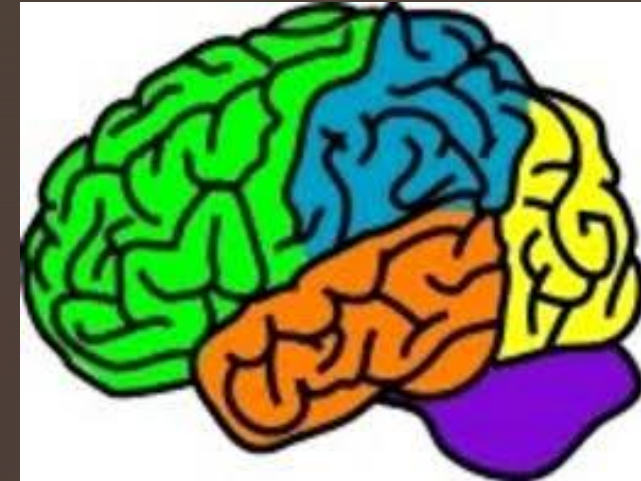
Heroin

Crack cocaine

PCP

Methamphetamines

Marijuana

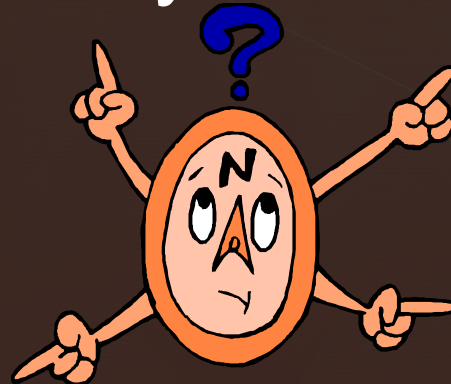


Definition of Delirium

- Change in cognition
 - memory deficit (mostly recent)
 - disorientation (mostly to time or place)
 - language disturbance (impaired naming, possibly aphasia)
 - development of perceptual disturbances (mostly visual)

Definition of Delirium- acute change in mental state

- Disturbance develops over a short period of time
 - usually hours to days
- Presentation fluctuates during the course of the day



Associated Features

- Disturbance of sleep
 - daytime sleepiness, nighttime agitation, poor sleep continuity
- Disturbance of psychomotor activity
 - hyperactive - agitated, psychotic
 - hypoactive - lethargic, confused
 - mixed

What can you do?

Recognize the illness

Get to medical help as needed

Acknowledge the needs of the person (privacy, respect)

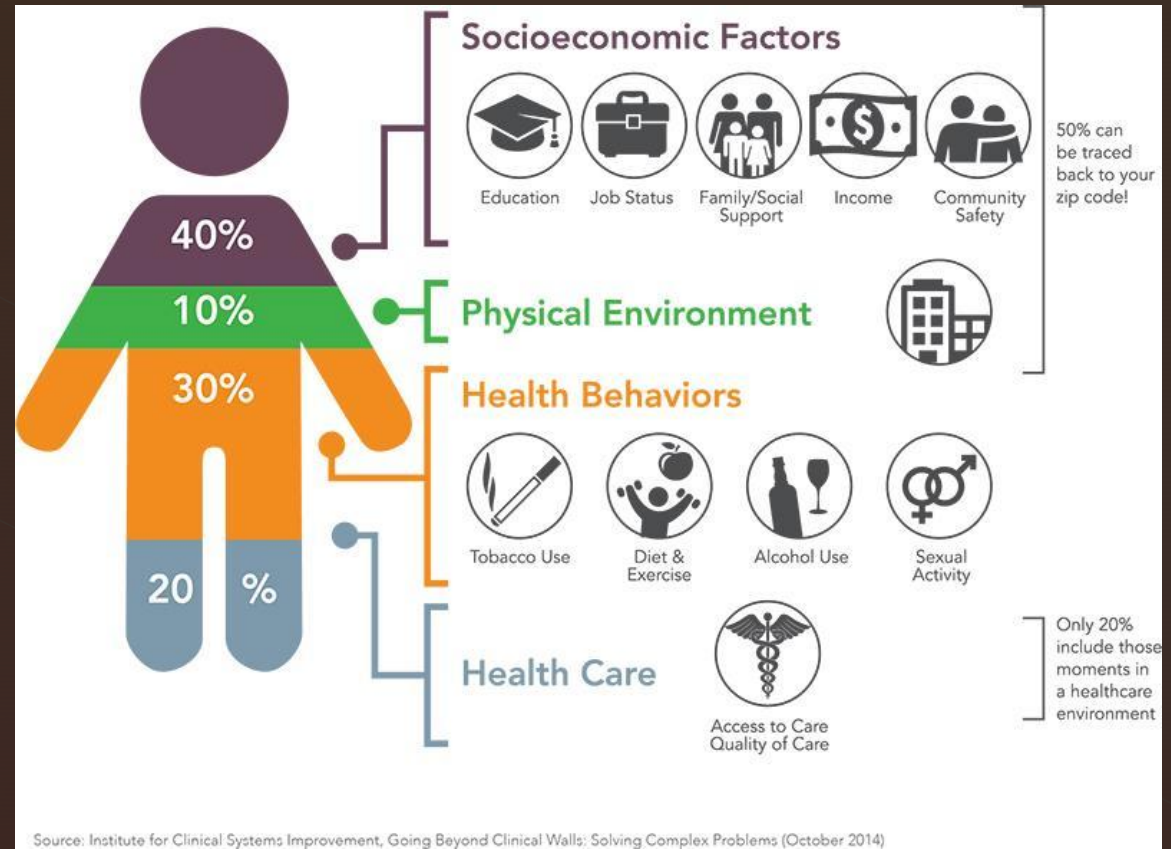
Be patient

Simplify requests

Do not overreact or confront

Social determinants of Health

- conditions in the environments:
- in which people are Born
- Live
- Learn
- Work
- Play
- Worship
- and Age
- that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.



Social Determinants of Health

Impact

- 20% of a person's health and well being is related to access to care and quality of services
- 80% of health outcomes is driven from physical environment, socio-economic determinants, and behavioral factors

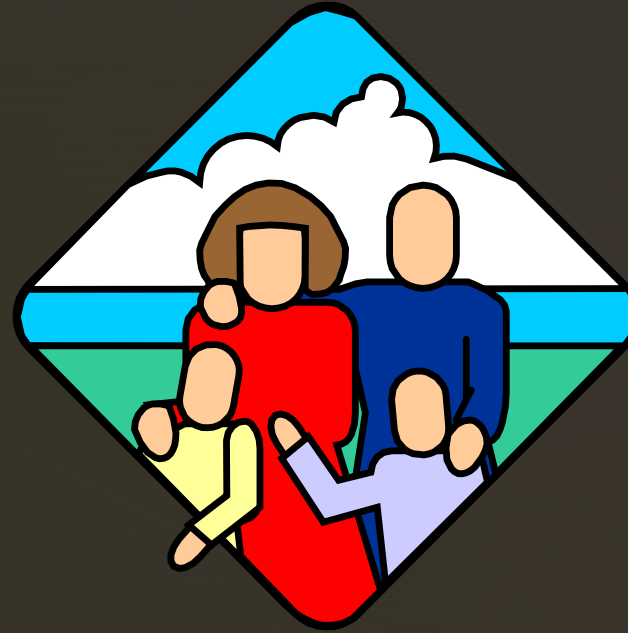


Social Determinants of Health for Seniors

- Economics- Social Security, Medicare
- Transportation-multiple appts
- Access to "Home" Health Care
- Support System-Social/Family connections
- Safety-scams, exploitation, abuse

Care for the Caregiver

- Support groups
- Mental health care
- Adult day care programs
- Home health agencies
- Long-term care facilities
- Respite
- Hospice personnel



Suggestions

- Training
 - Mental health education to non-mental health care givers
- Collaboration between agencies
- Advocate for parity of services
- More money for group homes/assisted living

In conclusion ~ Mental Illness in the Elderly



- Very complicated
- Confounding diagnosis
- Multiple medical problems
- Physiologic changes
- Stage of Life differences
- Very gratifying

Thank you for your attention ...



***we can make a
difference.***