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# **Family and Resident Workshop**

**Promoting Emotional Well-Being  
of Residents in Senior Living  
Communities**

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# What we will learn

- Common challenges facing older adults
- Depression
- Warning signs
- Activities to improve emotional well-being

# Mrs. Williams

Many older adults lead happy, fulfilling lives.

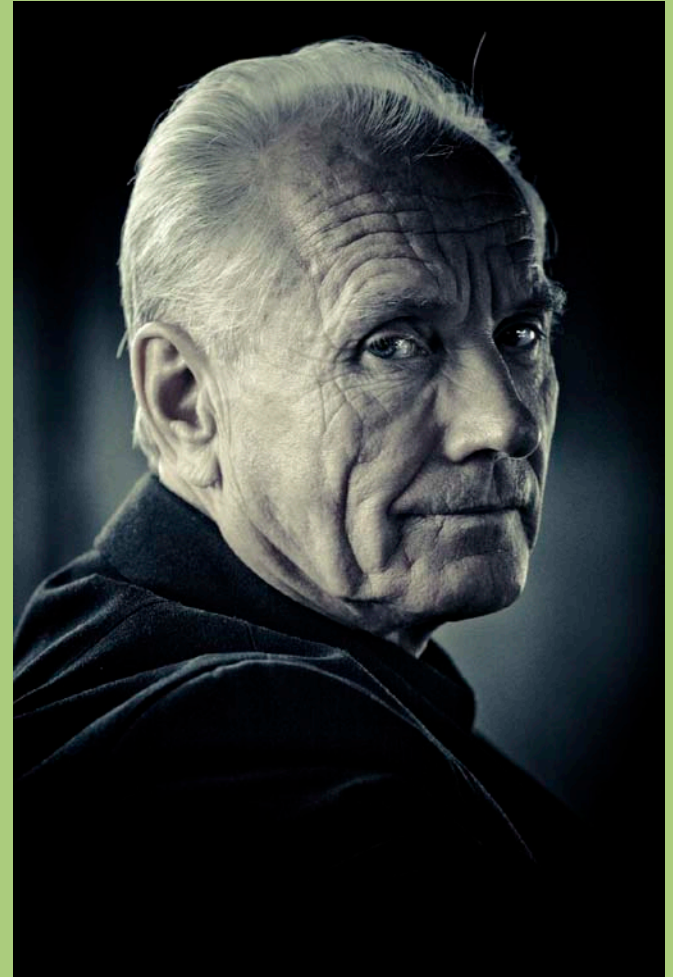


# Common challenges facing older adults:

- Family loss
- Social isolation
- Lack of a sense of safety
- Transitions
- Loss of status, sense of purpose
- Financial problems
- Physical disability, illness, or pain
- Mental illness
- Substance abuse

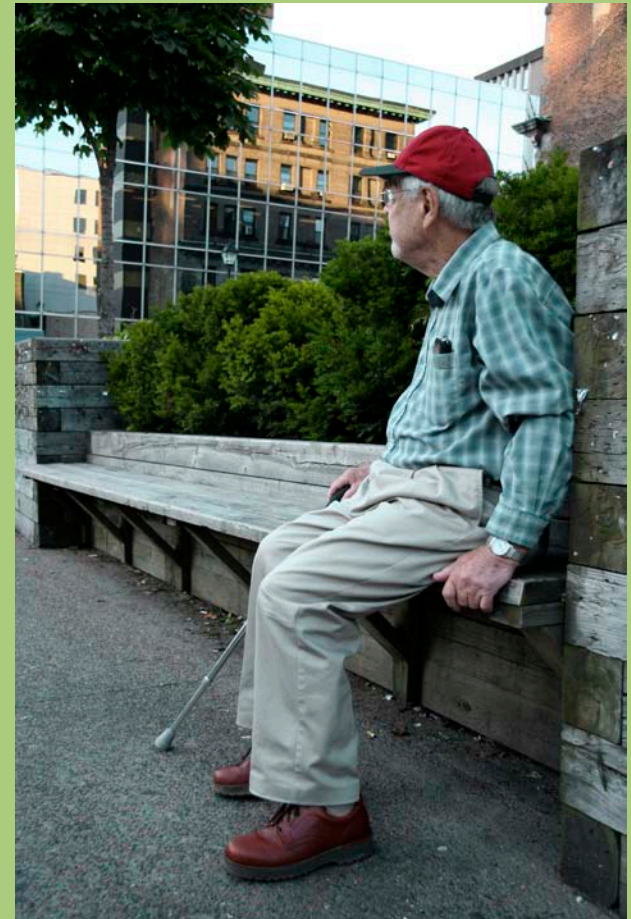
# Depression

- Depression is not a normal part of aging.
- Depression is treatable.



# Symptoms of depression

- Lack of interest in activities
- Overwhelmed by sadness, emptiness, or worthlessness
- Fatigue and lack of energy
- Changes in sleep or appetite



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# Seeking help

**Why some older adults do not seek mental health treatment:**

- Negative stereotypes
- Wanting to cope on own
- Uncomfortable talking about emotions
- Unfamiliar with mental health professionals
- Cost

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**What are some practical ways  
to overcome stigma and other  
barriers?**



# How we help a resident get treatment

- Assess mental health
- Make referrals
- Provide ongoing support



# Suicide among people over 65

- Rates are higher than the national average.
- 1 out of every 4 older adults who attempt suicide dies.
- 1 out of every 100–200 young people who attempt suicide dies.
- Passive or indirect suicide is a problem.

(Source: American Association of Suicidology. (2009). 2006 official final data.)

# **Warning signs of immediate risk of suicide**

- Threatening or talking of wanting to hurt or kill him/herself
- Looking for ways to kill him/herself
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide when this is not usual for the person

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# Talking about death and dying

- I've had a great life. If I die tomorrow, I'm ready.”
- “Death would solve all my problems.”

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# Respond immediately to any warning signs

- Call \_\_\_\_\_ [*Staff name and contact number*]

# Signs requiring referral to mental health treatment:

## Behavior

- Withdrawing from friends, family, or others
- Sleeping all the time or unable to sleep
- Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs

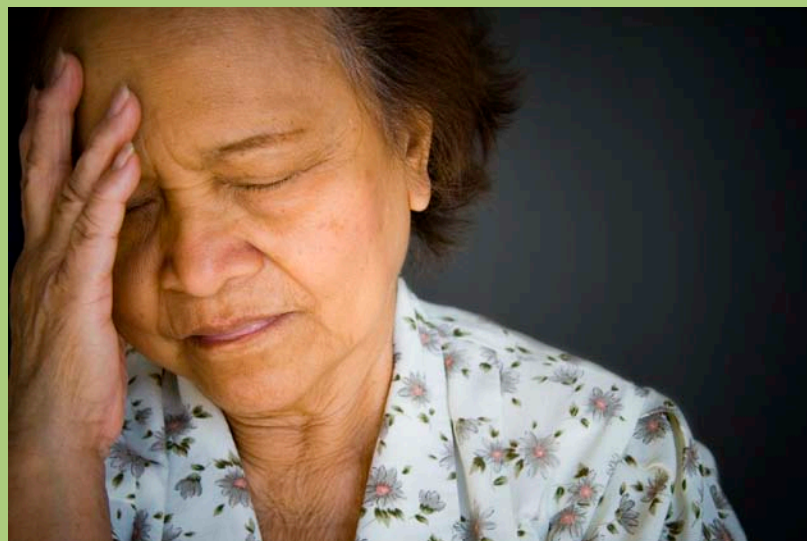
# Signs requiring referral to mental health treatment:

## Mood

- Hopeless or trapped
- No sense of purpose in life, no reason for living
- Anxious or agitated
- Rage, uncontrolled anger
- Dramatic changes in mood

# Discussion

- How would you know your family member is withdrawing from family or friends?
- What might an older adult say or do that indicates a sense of hopelessness?





# Mrs. Williams



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# **Actions that reduce the risk of suicide**

- Take care of yourself: Health and mental health
- Get involved: Intellectually and creatively
- Reach out: Strong social networks

# Keys to Mrs. Williams' recovery

- Medical and mental health treatment
- Strong and caring family relationships
- Involvement in social and recreational activities



# **How senior living communities promote the well-being of older adults**

Activities and programs to:

- Build relationships
- Maintain sense of purpose
- Stay physically active

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# Discussion

- What are some practical things you can do to encourage social interactions?
- What are some practical things you can do to create a positive physical environment?

# Some things to remember:

- Depression is not a normal part of aging
- Being active and involved increases emotional well-being
- There are things you can do



A vibrant bouquet of tulips in various colors including pink, yellow, orange, red, and purple. A white card with the text "Thank-you!" is held in the center of the bouquet by a clear plastic stand. The background is a light green gradient with two horizontal purple lines at the top.

*Thank-you!*