Symptoms of Depression

- Depressed mood most of the time
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities
- Disturbed sleep
- Weight loss or gain
- Fatigue or loss of energy

The Problem

- Depression affects many older adults.
- Depression can affect the ability of older adults to take care of themselves and live independently.
- Depression contributes to poor health outcomes for older adults. For example, they tend to recover more slowly from physical disorders such as strokes and fractures.
- Depression is the leading cause of suicide among older adults.

Risk Factors

- A new or chronic physical problem such as diabetes, stroke, bypass operation, or hip fracture
- Poor health or physical disability
- Personal or family history of depression
- Side effects of certain medications
- Changes in income, marital status, or social supports

The Solution: Evidence-Based Practices

- Effective treatments now exist that can reduce the severity of depression in up to 80 percent of older adults. These treatments have a strong scientific basis.
- The selection of a specific treatment depends on the older adult’s specific problems, outcomes desired, and his or her treatment preferences.

These treatments include the following:

- Psychotherapy interventions
- Antidepressant medications
- Multidisciplinary outreach services
- Collaborative and integrated physical and mental health care.