Family and Resident Workshop

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

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
Talking about death and dying

• I’ve had a great life. If I die tomorrow, I’m ready.”

• “Death would solve all my problems.”
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
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
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
Thank-you!