

Understanding DEPRESSION in Later Life

Signs and Symptoms of Depression in Older Adults

What should I look for?

Physical Appearance

- Dirty clothing, skin or hair
- Body odor, unshaven, hair uncombed
- Little attention to clothing worn, appearance
- Significant weight loss or weight gain
- Fatigue or exhaustion from lack of sleep, despair, etc.

Personality Change

- Decreased social contacts, isolation from others
- Sloppy appearance, lack of care for surroundings
- Lack of eye contact, limited social engagement
- Preoccupation with health concerns, losses, life challenges or sadness
- Lack of interest in hobbies, friends, or things the person formerly enjoyed
- Difficulty making decisions

Emotional State

- Anxious, nervous, fidgety
- Lack of trust, suspiciousness, blaming
- Angry, hostile, irritable
- Rapid mood changes
- Statements such as “no one cares” or “I’m all alone”
- Sense of discouragement, lack of hope, helplessness

Living Conditions

- Walks not shoveled, lawn not mowed
- Neglect of pets, farm animals or family members
- Little or no food
- Old newspapers, mail or dirty dishes lying around; limited care of surroundings
- Calendar on wrong month; little attention to time
- Shades drawn, garden/flowers neglected; signs of isolation