

Mental health and older adults



Many people think of the older years as a simpler, easier time of life. And there are surely many pleasures to enjoy. Elders may have the joys of grandchildren, travel, taking up new hobbies and a more relaxed pace.

However, older people can also face hardships. And these can impact their emotional and mental well-being. For example:

- They might suffer losses of loved ones.
- They may retire and lose both income and identity.
- Many have to leave their lifelong homes.
- They may misuse alcohol or substances to escape their feelings.
- They can develop illnesses that require them to take several medications. Some of these illnesses can cause physical and mental changes. The same goes for the medications. It can be hard to tell if an older person's symptoms are from illness, medication or emotional problems.

Older peoples' mental health needs

In a society that places so much importance on youth, change and novelty, elders can feel irrelevant. Yet they still often have much to contribute.

Elders can find ways to feel productive, necessary and important. For instance, they can mentor, teach and find other ways to share their lifetime experience.

Caring for yourself and the older people in your life

Aging has its challenges. As we and our loved ones grow older, mental health needs special attention since it impacts overall wellness.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, so now's a good time to get informed and be proactive. For more reading and information, visit [A Place for Mom](#) and the [National Institute of Mental Health](#).

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