

# Treating Depression with Life Enrichment Activities

## ***What is Depression?***

Depression is a mood disorder in which the individual is deeply unhappy, demoralized, self-derogatory, and bored. The person does not feel well, loses stamina easily, has poor appetite, and is listless and unmotivated. Depression is so widespread that it has been called the “common cold” of mental disorders.

***Depression affects more than 6.5 million of the 35 million Americans aged 65 years or older.***

## ***Why does depression in the older population often go untreated?***

Depression in elderly people often goes untreated because many people think that depression is a normal part of aging and a natural reaction to chronic illness, loss and social transition. Elderly people do face noteworthy challenges to their connections through loss and also face medical vulnerability and mortality. For the elderly population depression can come in different sizes and shapes. Many elderly people and their families don't recognize the symptoms of depression, aren't aware that it is a medical illness and don't know how it is treated.

## ***Signs of depression to look for in your senior loved one:***

- *Memory problems*
- *Confusion*
- *Social withdrawal*
- *Loss of appetite*
- *Weight loss*
- *Vague complaints of pain*
- *Inability to sleep*
- *Irritability*
- *Delusions (fixed false beliefs)*
- *Hallucinations*
- *Persistent and Vague Complaints*
- *Help-seeking*
- *Moving in more slow manner*
- *Demanding behavior*



Depression is a treatable illness. Social isolation and loneliness are risk factors for depression. Seniors who enjoy mentally stimulating activities help to reduce the risk of depression.

## ***Enriching Life Every Day***

It's not always easy to find just the right activity that might help pull a lonely, sad or frustrated parent out of the house, out of a funk or even relieve depression, but having a caregiver to give support and share ideas can help. Our staff can help facilitate outings and look for senior activities that they can join in on together.

- *Discuss Current & History*
- *Arts & Crafts Play*
- *Games/Cards*
- *Record/Arrange Recipes*
- *Visit Neighbors & Friends*
- *Religious Readings*
- *Family scrap booking*
- *Conversation*
- *Plan visits, outings & trips*
- *Reading*
- *Assist with entertainment*
- *Attend Religious Services*
- *Attend Club Meetings*
- *Attend Sporting Events*

“Life-Span Development 12<sup>th</sup> Edition” by John W. Santrock,

“Depression in Older Persons Fact Sheet”, [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

“Enriching Activities for the Elderly”, [www.parentgiving.com](http://www.parentgiving.com)