



The Facts About...

Depression in Older People

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has identified that depression in the elderly is “the next big public health problem”.

GPs often (wrongly) assume that being elderly is, in itself, a miserable experience.

They do not consider the possibility of depression being an issue for older patients.

Incidence of Depression in Older People

Older people may have more reasons to feel down - e.g. they may be dealing with health problems, the death of a partner or friend(s), stopping work, feeling lonely and/or isolated.

Most people will cope well, in spite of these difficulties, but...

Depression can affect 1 in 5 older people living in the community and 2 in 5 living in care.

Diagnosis of Depression in Older People

GPs, health workers and carers are being urged to ask two simple questions to determine whether an older patient could be depressed. The questions are:

- “In the past month, have you been troubled by feeling down, depressed or hopeless?”
- “Have you experienced little interest or pleasure in doing things?”

If the answer to one or both questions is “Yes”, the Royal College of Psychiatrists recommends a formal assessment by a GP.

Equally, older people may be reluctant to consider their mental health and to accept help if there is a problem. The stoical generation often suffer in silence.

Treatment of Depression in Older People

Older people with depression can be given support and treatment, improving their quality of life.

About 60% of older people with depression recover after a course of talking therapy, compared with less than 50% of younger patients.

Depression does happen - and it can be treated.

Treatment does not have to be taking medication but can also involve talking therapies.

If you are concerned that you or someone you know might be suffering from depression, help may be found at:

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/depressioninolderadults.aspx>

Support Services

Helpline:

- Call Samaritans on 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline/listening service)

Support Groups:

- Pacifica's peer support group allow you to connect with others going through the same challenges. Join here: <http://www.thinkpacific.com/anxiety-peer-support-groups/>
- Join the Anxiety and depression support group for the UK & Ireland on Facebook.

Alternatively visit your GP for assessment and you may be referred to a councillor.

To contact Share and Care Homeshare:

Tel: **020 3865 3398** or **020 8405 6316**

E-mail: info@shareandcare.co.uk

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This fact sheet should only be used as a guideline and we recommend you seek professional advice.