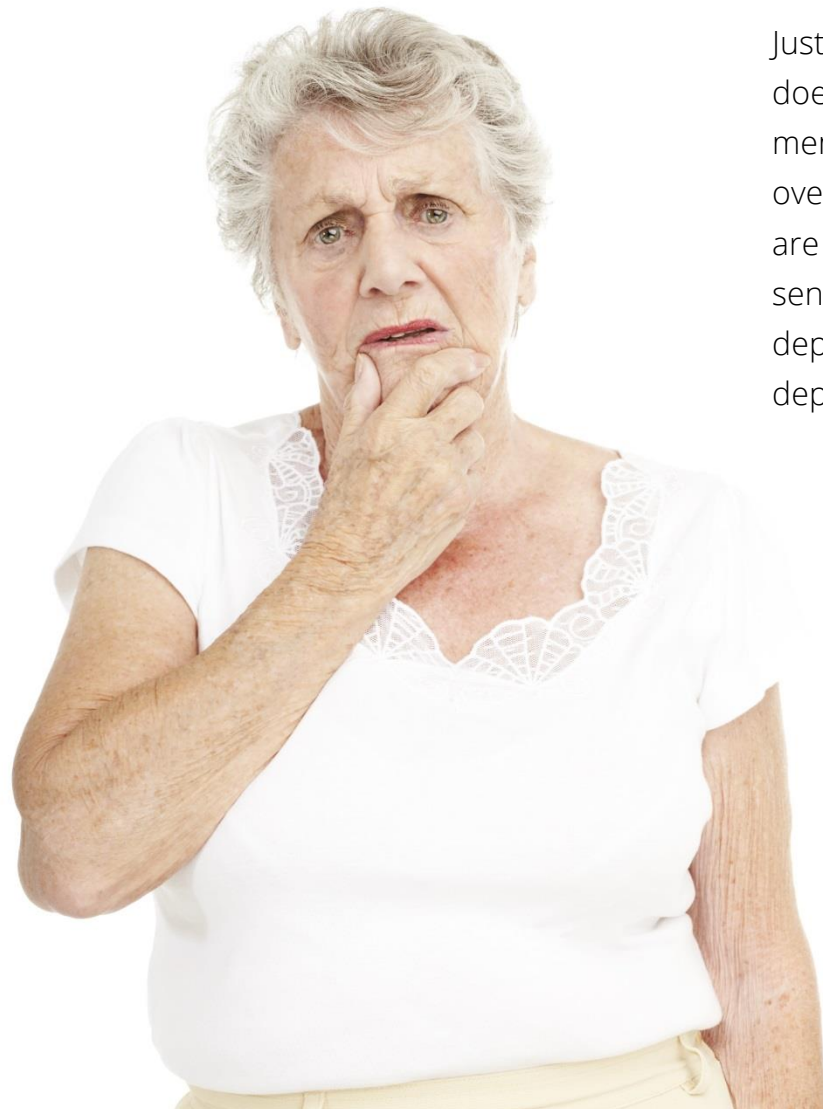


DEFEATING DEPRESSION IN OLDER PEOPLE



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As people age, they may become depressed for various reasons. They may have a medical condition that contributes to depression, or they may be experiencing a more isolated existence after the death of a spouse or close friends, for example. Consider these statistics about depression in people over the age of 65: About 25 percent of seniors are depressed, and over 70 percent report feelings of isolation and loneliness. Many of these seniors—about 33 percent—live alone.



Just because depression may be common in older people, it doesn't mean it's a normal part of aging. As concerned family members, we want to help our aging parents or loved ones overcome or avoid depression. Listed on the following pages are ways in which depression is unique in older people, why seniors can become depressed, signs our loved ones are depressed, and ways to help bring them out of the fog of depression.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT DEPRESSION IN OLDER PEOPLE?

- Because older people are assumed to slow down as they age, doctors and family members may fail to spot signs of depression
- Seniors with depression often experience sleeplessness
- Depression can increase a senior's risk of heart disease
- Illnesses and/or disabilities can contribute to depression
- Depression increases a senior's risk of death from illnesses
- Recovery and rehabilitation time can be hindered by depression
- The possibility of suicide is increased when a senior has depression, especially in older white men





WHAT INCREASES THE POSSIBILITY OF DEPRESSION IN OLDER PEOPLE?

- Being single, divorced, or widowed
- Being a woman
- Having gone through stressful experiences recently, such as death of a loved one or a recent move
- Being fearful of dying
- Having had previous suicide attempts
- Living alone or being socially isolated
- Enduring chronic or serious pain
- Not having an active social network

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION IN OLDER PEOPLE?

- Being sad, irritable, and/or anxious
- Loss of interest in once-enjoyable activities
- Experiencing sleep disturbances such as sleeping too much, insomnia, difficulty getting to sleep
- Loss of appetite
- Not returning phone calls
- Not being sociable or talkative
- Neglecting personal care or housekeeping
- Losing weight
- Not feeling “worthy”
- Feeling tired



WHAT HELPS DEFEAT DEPRESSION IN OLDER PEOPLE?

- Increase social activities; [local NJ senior care](#) centers offers many opportunities: dances, bingo, luncheons, and presentations on a variety of topics
- Increase physical activity
- Take medications as they've been prescribed
- Eat healthy meals everyday
- Take part in hobbies or activities that are enjoyable
- Get a healthy dose of laughter each day
- Consider caring for a pet
- Get plenty of sleep each night
- Help others by volunteering
- Get medical help and treatment; antidepressants or other forms of therapy may help significantly
- Consider engaging outside companionship from a [senior home care company in NJ](#). A home health aide presents a friendly face and helps with daily living activities and household chores such as laundry, vacuuming, dressing, hygiene and grooming assistance, and meal preparation. An aide can also help clients become more involved by helping them write letters, taking them to visit friends, playing board or card games with them, and doing other activities which will help lift them out of their depression.

About Visiting Angels Senior Care Services: Visiting Angels is a nationally-known, locally-owned home care company which employs experienced home health aides and conducts comprehensive background screenings to ensure aides meet or exceed state standards. Make Visiting Angels your choice in senior home care. For more information on Visiting Angels, visit <http://www.njseniorcare.com>.