



Suicide Awareness

Suicide and Older Adults

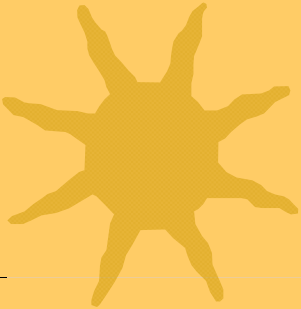
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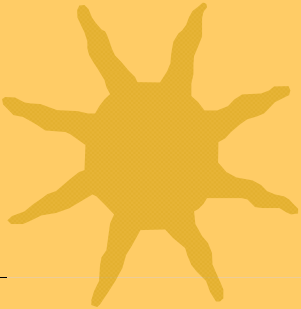
Dr. Christine Cauffield, President and CEO

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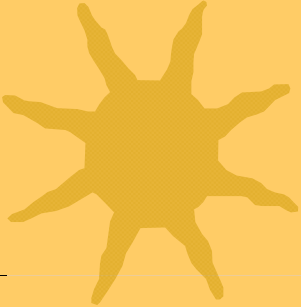
*Florida Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Corporation*





The Aging of America

- ★ Approximately 12% of all Americans are over the age of 65.
- ★ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has projected that by 2030, the number of Older Adult Americans will double to 70 million people, or one in every five Americans.

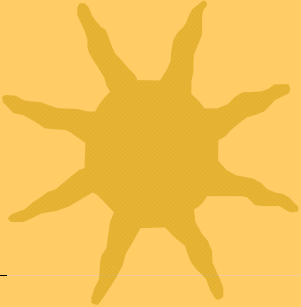


The Aging of America

- ★ In 1940, the life expectancy of a 65 year old was 12½ years; today, it is 17½ years.
- ★ Adults 65 and over are fastest growing segment of the population (approximately 2,729,624 in Florida alone)



Suicide and Older Adults



- ★ Suicide in the elderly is the third-leading cause of death related to injury
- ★ The suicide rate increases with age and is highest among Americans age 65 and older
- ★ Men accounted for 85% of suicides among people age 65 and older in 1998
- ★ The largest relative increase occurred among those 80-84 years of age. The rate for men in this group increased 17%
- ★ Suicide rates among older adults are highest among those who are divorced or widowed



Suicide and Older Adults



- ★ Caucasian men over the age of 85 are at the greatest risk of all age-gender-race groups.
- ★ Contrary to popular belief, only a small percentage (2-4%) of suicide victims have been diagnosed with a terminal illness at the time of their death.
- ★ 66% - 90% of elderly suicides have at least one psychiatric diagnosis.
- ★ Older persons are less likely to reach out by calling a crisis line than their younger counterparts.



Suicide and Older Adults

Suicide Warning Signs

- ★ Nearly 5 million of the nearly 32 million Americans aged 65 and older suffer from some sort of depression. Depression is **not** a “normal” part of aging
- ★ A physician has seen 20% of elderly suicides over age 75 in the 24 hours prior to them committing suicide.
- ★ 70% of older adult suicide victims have visited their primary care physician in the month prior to committing suicide



Suicide and Older Adults

- ★ Older persons tend to be more socially isolated and have more health problems
- ★ Older adults frequently make fewer attempts per suicide and use highly lethal methods



Risk Factors: Prescription Drug Misuse

It is estimated that:

- ★ 85% of older adults take at least one prescription drug daily
- ★ 76% use more than one prescription drug
- ★ 70% use over-the-counter drugs daily
- ★ Alcohol and prescription drug misuse is estimated to affect up to 17% of older adults in the U.S.
- ★ It is also estimated that almost 1/4 of nursing home admissions occur because the patient is unable to take his or her medications properly.



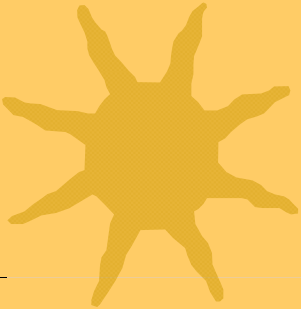
Risk Factors: Prescription Drug Misuse

Older adults develop problems of misuse of prescription medications as a result of:

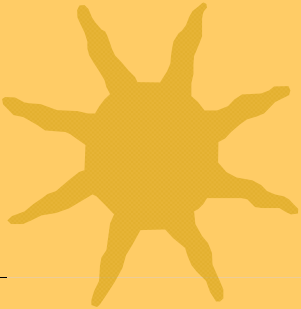
- ★ Their own well-intentioned noncompliance
- ★ Physician prescribing too high a dose
- ★ Lack of physician coordination of medications
- ★ Financial constraints (medication vs. food)
- ★ Cognitive impairment



Risk Factors: Substance Abuse



- ★ It is estimated that there are 464,036 older adults with substance use disorders in Florida
- ★ Currently, rates for alcohol-related hospitalizations among older patients are similar to those for heart attacks
- ★ 70% of older adult hospital admissions are for illness and accidents related to alcohol



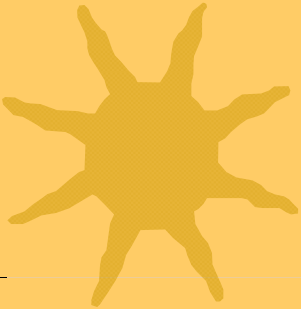
Risk Factors: Substance Abuse

- ★ In Florida, the Older Adult Work Group of the Florida Commission on Mental Health and Substance Abuse found in 2000 that 16.4% of all adults with substance abuse problems receive services, yet only 2% of adults who receive such services are 60 and older.



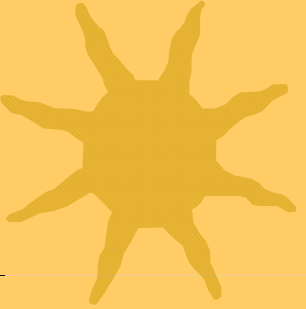
Risk Factors: Substance Abuse

Therefore, the problem of substance abuse and prescription drug misuse among older adults remains for the large part, underestimated, under diagnosed, and under treated.





Substance Abuse



- ★ In the elderly health problems caused by alcohol or other substance abuse go largely uncalculated
- ★ Social isolation and depression can lead to the late on-set of alcohol abuse in the elderly
- ★ Alcohol related falls can lead to hip fractures and other serious injuries



Risk Factors: Cognitive Impairment

Symptoms of cognitive impairment:

- ★ Memory loss
- ★ Language disturbance
- ★ Decline in judgment and reasoning
- ★ Personality change



Risk Factors: Cognitive Impairment

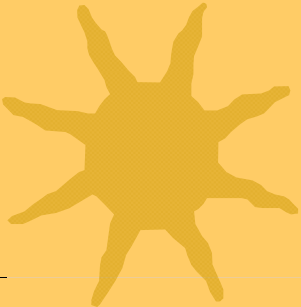
- ★ Frontal Lobe Disinhibition
- ★ Psychiatric Sequelae
- ★ Transient Ischemic Attacks
- ★ Alzheimer's Disease – Misdiagnosed
- ★ Lack of Geropsych Beds



Risk Factors: Mental Health Issues

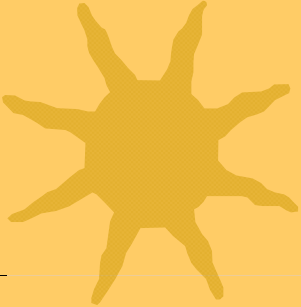
Depression and Older Adults

- ★ In a study conducted by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, 16% of older adults surveyed displayed one or more tendencies toward depression.
- ★ Primary care physicians (PCPs) miss diagnosing depression in half of older adult patients they see.
- ★ PCPs are 2.5 times more likely to diagnose depression in women patients over 65 than males.





The Cost of Untreated Mental Illness



- The cost of not treating mental illness is very expensive

- Depression can lead to self neglect and the need for a nursing home much sooner than needed



- Untreated depression and anxiety over chronic physical illnesses add cost through increased visits to the doctor

- Studies have shown that depression and other mental illnesses add to length of hospital stays



- Assessment and preventive treatment can reduce costs as well as tremendously improving a person's quality of life



Risk Factors: Mental Health Issues

Reasons for Depression:

- ★ **Society:** Lack of value attached to older adults
- ★ **Health:** Chronic conditions, alcoholism, disability
- ★ **Social:** Lack of social interaction, family members' frustration
- ★ **Life Events:** Death of a loved one, financial problems
- ★ **Genetics:** Family history of depression

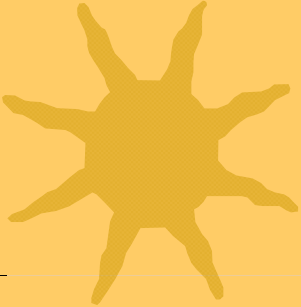


Risk Factors: Mental Health Issues

- ★ Multiple losses
 - Health
 - Physical abilities
 - Sexual functioning
 - Death of partner
 - Death of friends
- ★ Unresolved grief issues
 - Past pain = current situation



Myths about Suicide & Older Adults



★ Depression among the elderly cannot be treated

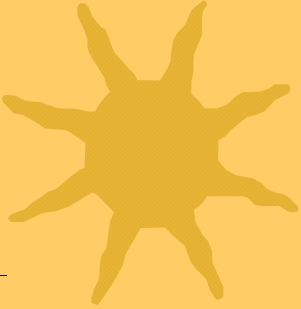


★ Most completed suicides are terminally ill

★ Elders who complete suicide do not have close family members

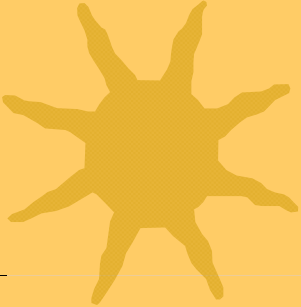


★ Only elderly persons who live alone are at risk for suicide



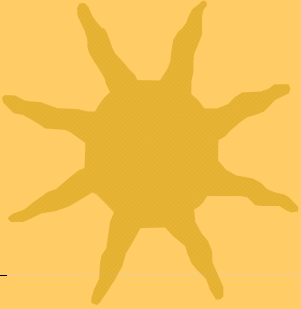
Myths about Suicide & Older Adults

- ★ Suicide and suicidal behavior are normal responses to stresses experienced by most people
- ★ There is nothing that can be done to stop an elderly suicide
- ★ Suicidal elderly do not exhibit warning signs of their suicidal ideation or intent



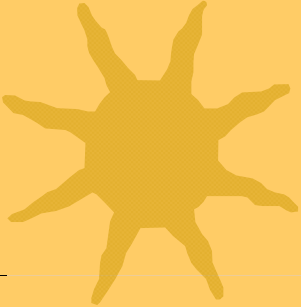
Changing Community Policy & Attitudes

- ★ Increase transportation options (in-home, on-site services)
- ★ Increase training and interest in gerontology and mental health disorders for healthcare professionals
- ★ Programs and services that promote social interaction
- ★ Elder-specific programs to address substance abuse and mental health issues (GTS, medicine bag)



Changing Community Policy & Attitudes

- ★ Increase awareness and prevention efforts
- ★ Ensure assessments for substance abuse, depression, and dementia are standard medical protocol
- ★ Community coalitions/committees for older adults

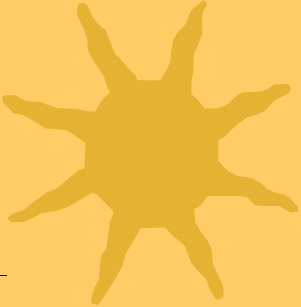


Community Resources

- ★ Baker Act option – voluntary/involuntary
- ★ Outpatient services
- ★ In home/On-site programs
- ★ Senior Friendship Centers
- ★ Private therapists
- ★ Religious/spiritual leaders



Dealing With Depression



★ Social activities of any type

- Join a social group or go to a senior center
- Take up a new interest

Volunteering, going on day trips, painting or any other activity that brings joy to life

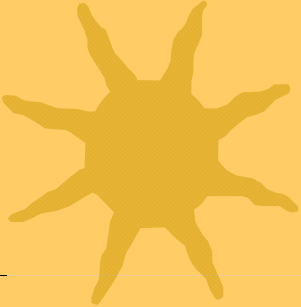
– Increased Activity

Exercise and yoga are good for the mind and body
many gyms offer classes for the elderly





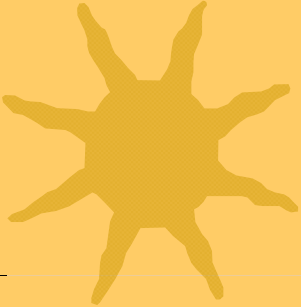
How You Can Help



- ★ Be aware. Learn the warning signs
- ★ Be direct. Talk openly and freely about suicide
- ★ Be willing to listen. Allow for expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings
- ★ Offer empathy, not sympathy
- ★ Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support
- ★ Offer hope
- ★ Take action!



Model Program *I.M.P.A.C.T.*



★ Improving Mood: Providing Access to Collaborative Treatment for Late Life Depression



★ To recognize, treat and prevent future relapses in older patients with depression in primary care

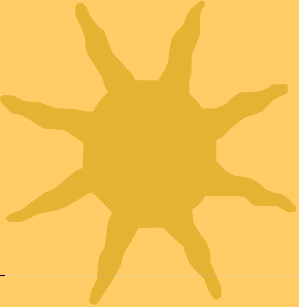


- About 5-10% of older patients have major depression, yet most are not recognized and treated



I.M.P.A.C.T.

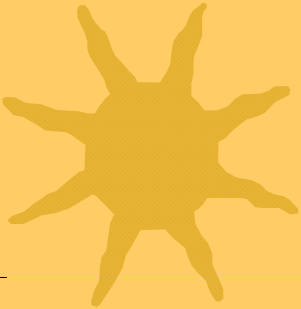
- Uses a team approach to deliver depression care to elderly adults in primary care setting. Older adults are given a choice of medication from a primary care physician or psychotherapy with a mental health provider. If they do not improve, their level of care is increased by adding supervision by a mental health specialist



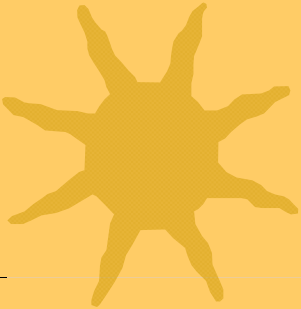


The Florida BRITE Project

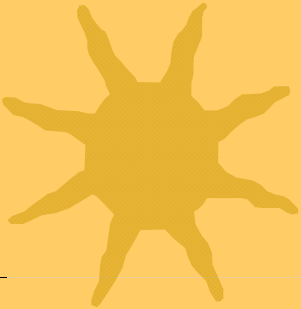
Brief Intervention and Treatment for
Elders



The mission of the BRITE project is to serve individuals 55 years and older to identify non-dependent substance use or prescription medication issues and to provide effective service strategies prior to their need for more extensive or specialized substance abuse treatment.



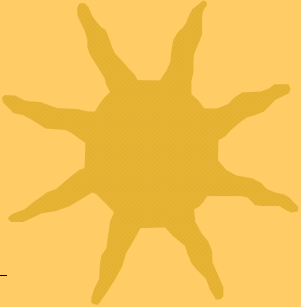
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- ★ The Florida BRITE Project is the first federally funded SBIRT project that focuses on the older adult
 - ★ BRITE screens and provides brief interventions in aging services, retirement communities, senior housing, at health fairs and at other locations
 - ★ Counselors also screen for depression and risk of suicide



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- From March 2004 through May 1, 2007 3497 people were screened in four Florida counties.
 - Most were referred for one of three problems: 68% for depression, 23% for prescription medications, and 8% for alcohol problems
 - Illicit drug use, over the counter drug misuse or suicide risk amounted to about 1% of referrals, although the percentage of those screening positive for suicide risk was 14%
 - For those completing treatment there were statistically significant decreases in scores on the alcohol and depression scales



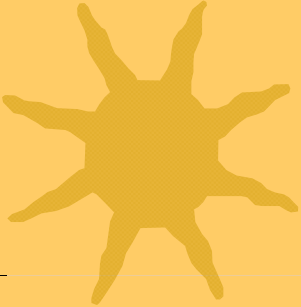
BRITE programs are located in areas shown in the map below





Little Havana Health Program Miami/Dade County

- ★ Mental health services tailored to fit the needs of the elderly
- ★ Comprehensive health and social assessments are conducted with participants in the Agency's nutrition program, senior centers and other service programs

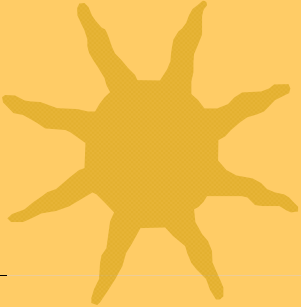




Little Havana Health Program

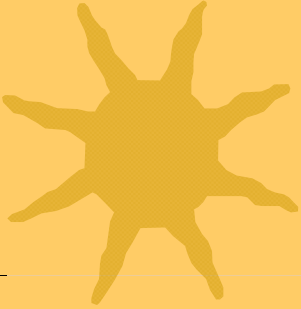


- ★ All participant undergo a comprehensive health and social assessment with a trained caseworker
- ★ All services are integrated internally so that client's have access to all they might need, if it is available in the community.
- ★ When an assessment indicates that a serious mental disorder requiring immediate treatment exists, staff asks for permission to contact the client's family or physician.



Little Havana Health Program

- ★ With the client's permission assessment findings are shared with the physician so that treatment can begin or a referral can be made
- ★ Little Havana's primary mental health services are tailored to older people with a variety of mental health problems
- ★ Clients whose assessments indicate symptoms of depression are counseled by Little Havana clinical staff and by retired professional volunteers

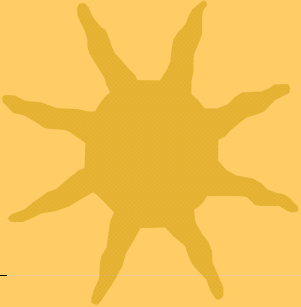


Little Havana Health Program

- ★ At risk clients are offered consultation with the program's volunteer psychiatrist
- ★ When isolation or loss is a major factor, clients are urged to participate in therapeutic activities offered by Little Havana senior centers and adult day health centers. Participants are also encouraged to serve in a volunteer role to enhance social support systems



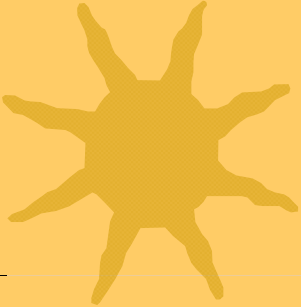
*Alcohol and Drug Services Prevention
for the Elderly,
Fairfax County, VA.*



- ★ The Alcohol and Drug Services' Prevention for the Elderly Program utilizes a tightly integrated program of interagency cooperation and collaboration to raise public awareness, educate professionals, and conduct prevention and outreach throughout the county



Prevention for the Elderly, Fairfax County, VA.



★ Community Networking - facilitating identification of older adults who should be encouraged to accept mental health and substance abuse services



★ Case Consultations - offered by phone, on staffing teams and at home



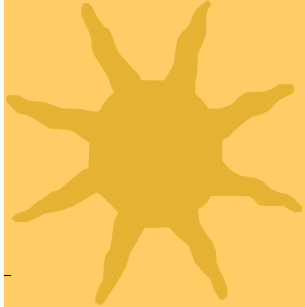
★ Prevention and Outreach – using phone calls and home visits to reach older adults who are thought to be candidates for screening



Prevention for the Elderly, Fairfax County, VA.



- ★ Education and Training – including a six session Wellness discussion for Seniors and training for human services professionals to raise awareness of substance abuse and mental health issues and provide information about community resources



Prevention

- ★ The program's primary activities focus on prevention, extending the team's messages regarding alcohol and medication misuse and abuse through:
 - Booths/exhibits at senior fairs and the county fair
 - Distribution of public information materials
 - Sponsorship of a substance abuse awareness campaign involving as many as 15 – 20 workshops a month
 - Promotion of Older Americans Month in May to build public awareness



Wellness Discussions

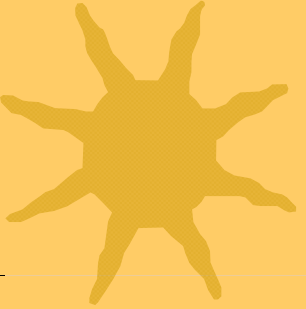
★ Sessions are offered once a month .
Alcohol and medications are addressed in all sessions.

– Topics include

- Wise use of medications
- How to talk to your doctor
- Habits over a lifetime
- Stress and retirement
- Emotions and what to do with them
- When one drink is too many
- How to talk with and help someone with a problem
- How alcohol affects others



Keys to Success



- ★ Responsive local government
- ★ Agencies that are committed to collaboration
- ★ Cultural competence

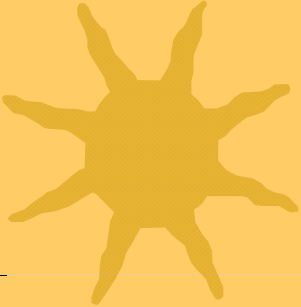


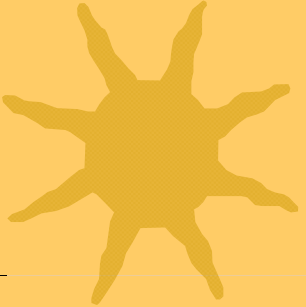


Florida Coalition for Improved Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for Older Floridians

The mission statement of the coalition:

To work together to improve the availability and quality of mental health and substance abuse services for older Floridians and their families through training, education, research and increased public awareness



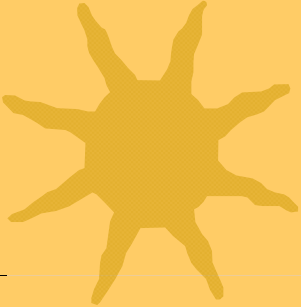


Comprehensive Mental Health Services

- ★ The Coalition is developing a comprehensive mental health services act for older Floridians and working with the State's legislatures on implementing this change in public policy



Steering Committee Members



Christine Cauffield, PsyD Co- Chair

Winter Park

Stephen Ferrante, MSW Co-Chair

Ft Lauderdale

Jim Akin, ACSW

Tallahassee

William Aycrigg, MSW, LCSW

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Virginia Glynn Barr, ASCW

Ft. Walton Beach

Larry Dupree, PhD

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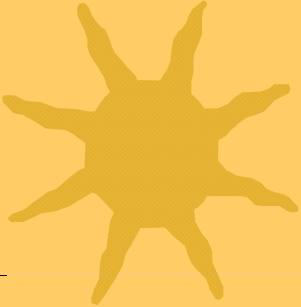
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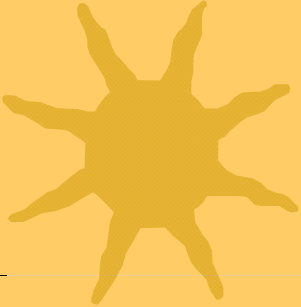
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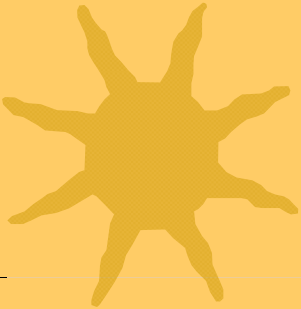
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