

Caring for an Older Adult with Mental Health Needs

BY
TERESA SIMS, LCSW
TERESA GAMEZ, MA



Disclaimer

The purpose of this presentation is in no way to replace medical advice or professional counseling. Rather, it's about illustrating and raising awareness and identifying resources. If you have specific questions or concerns, consult your primary doctor or a mental health professional.

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What is in your backpack?

Past, Present,
future Stress



PRESENT
STRESS

Can become your toolbox

Self-Compassion



Give and Receive

You are the light



Caregiving – A Very Fulfilling Job

- Changing a life by
 - Doing for them what they can no longer do for themselves
 - Giving them their dignity and worth back
 - Helping them smile when they may not have much to smile about



Fulfilling But Hard

- 24/7
- Suffering
- Unappreciated
- Judged
- Isolated
- Financial Implications
- Own Health
- Mental Health Issues



The Conversation

Coming Up

- Common understanding of mental illness
- Importance of recognizing the early signs
- Common triggers for mental illness in seniors
- Most common mental health issues in older adults and their warning signs
- How to support an older adult that has mental health issues.

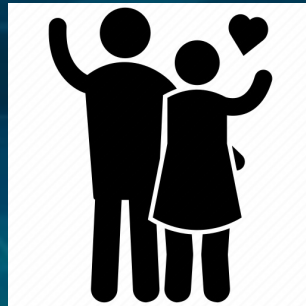
Understanding Mental Illness

- Condition that affects a person's:

Thinking



Feelings



Behaviors



- Mental Illness vs. Normal Aging

Understanding Mental Illness (cont.)

- Treatment vs. Cure
- Causes of Mental Illness
 - Genetic Disposition
 - Other Biological Factors
 - Environmental Factors

Triggers for Mental Illness Common to Seniors

Health



Role



Authority



Circumstances



Stress Tolerance



Importance of Recognizing The Early Signs



- Not always visible
- Adverse effect on the person's health
- Can grow into a serious and pervasive problem

Warning Signs



Changes that are out of character; loss of interest

Confusion, trouble concentrating or making decisions



Changes in appetite

Decline in mood, hopelessness, negative thoughts

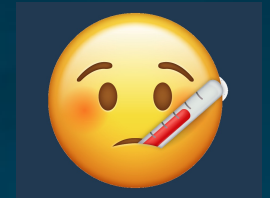


Warning Signs (cont.)



Excessive guilt; worthlessness; thoughts of death

Physical problems not medically justified



Sleep disruption; fatigue

Restlessness; impatient; easily irritated





Providing Emotional Support

- Listen to them; help them identify their feelings
- Empathize and Normalize
- Identify their anxiety/depression provoking thoughts
- Help them accept their anxious/depressive thoughts



Providing Emotional Support Cont'n

- Trigger positive thoughts
- Help them find meaning/purpose
- Don't react to their negative behaviors
- Watch your own thoughts
- Use distractions



Providing Supportive Actions

- Healthy diet, regular exercise and sufficient sleep
- Consulting a doctor and/or receiving counseling
- Meditation and prayer
- Progressive muscle relaxation exercises



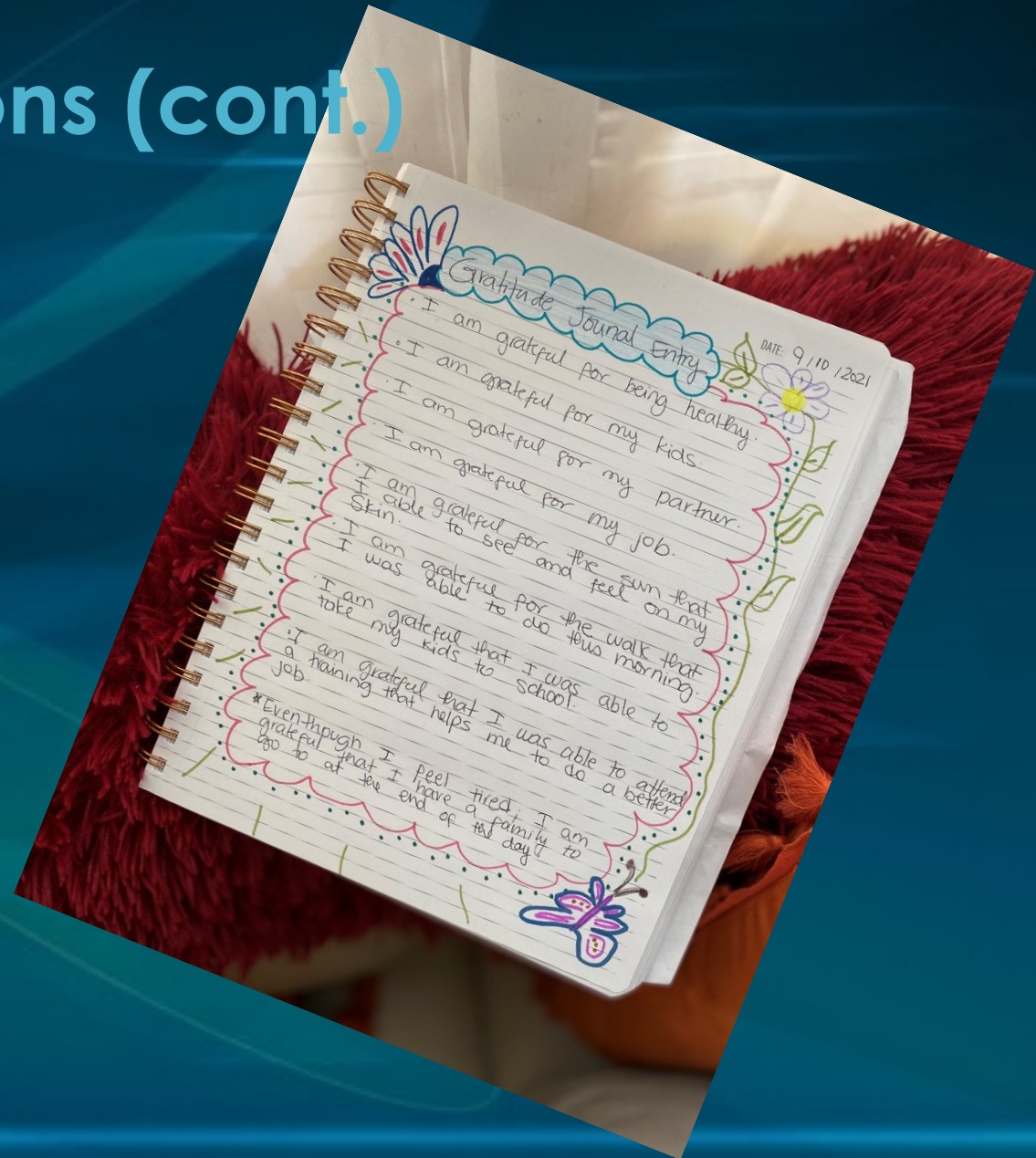
Providing Supportive Actions (cont.)

- Breathing exercises
- Taking a bath and getting a massage
- Essential oils and sunlight exposure
- Art and music



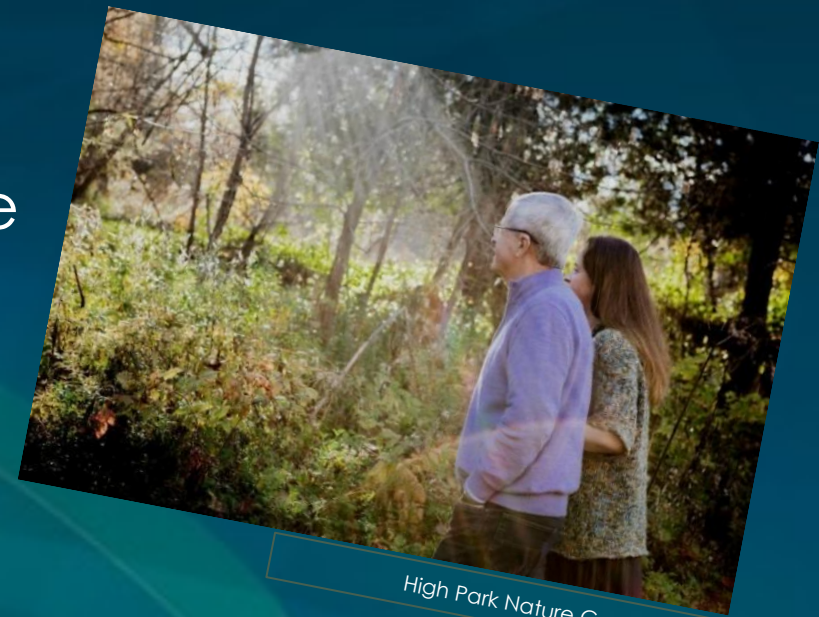
Providing Supportive Actions (cont.)

- Visualization
- Gratitude Journal
- Eliminate/reduce triggers
- Provide them with simple tasks



Providing Supportive Actions (cont.)

- Build a routine
- Increase their leisure and social activities
- Having someone to talk to
- Give them opportunities to be out in nature



High Park Nature Centre

Caring For Yourself

- Use all these techniques on yourself
- Have self-compassion
- Find others to share some responsibilities with



References

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[Mental Health Awareness | Diseases | Resources | Genomics | CDC](#)

[Loneliness and Social Isolation Linked to Serious Health Conditions \(cdc.gov\)](#)

- American Psychiatric Association (APA) [What Is Mental Illness? \(psychiatry.org\)](#)
- Sutter Health [Eating Well for Mental Health | Sutter Health](#)
- The Emotional Wellness Platform [Wequip](#)
- The Kim Foundation [What are the Causes of Mental Illness? - The Kim Foundation](#)
- Royal College of Psychiatrists, UK "Depression in older people" video
- "The medical benefits of art and music therapy" [Claricode.com](#)
- "Gratitude Journal" [Positivepsychology.com](#)
- "Guided Imagery" [Clevelandclinic.org](#)

Contact Details

Teresa Gamez, AMFT 124372, Mental Health Therapist

Ethnic Wellness Program

Gardner Health Services | Specialty Mental Health

160 East Virginia St., Suite #280, San Jose, CA 95112

Cell: [408.876.1765](tel:408.876.1765) Email: tgamez@gfhn.org

Teresa Sims, LCSW 65548, Program Supervisor

Storytelling and In-Home Peer Respite Programs

Gardner Health Services | Specialty Mental Health

1621 Gold St., Alviso, CA 95002

Cell: [408.568.7829](tel:408.568.7829) Email: tsims@gfhn.org



www.gardnerhealthservices.org