



CE Webinar

Evidence-Based Strategies for Supporting Older Adults with Depression & Anxiety

KEY INSIGHTS
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connections
— by ComForCare —

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ABOUT THE SESSION: Depression and anxiety can significantly affect an older adult's health, function, independence, and quality of life, yet symptoms may be overlooked or mistaken for normal aging or other health conditions. This webinar explored common signs and risk factors, screening and referral considerations, pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic approaches, and strategies for supporting emotional and cognitive well-being through meaningful, person-centered engagement.

INSIGHTS & RESOURCES

Recognize changes that may signal depression or anxiety in older adults.

- Depression and anxiety are not normal parts of aging, and symptoms may appear as withdrawal, irritability, excessive worry, sleep or appetite changes, fatigue, functional decline, or physical complaints.
- Look for a change from the person's baseline and consider contributing factors such as grief, chronic illness, pain, medications, sleep disruption, social isolation, caregiver stress, and loss of independence.
- Statements about suicide, self-harm, wanting to die, or having no reason to live should always be taken seriously and require prompt evaluation.

Use screening and assessment to support early recognition and appropriate referral.

- Assess the onset, triggers, duration, severity, and functional impact of changes in mood, behavior, or anxiety.
- Review medications, over-the-counter products, caffeine, alcohol, pain, sleep, cognition, sensory changes, and other factors that may contribute to symptoms.
- Screening tools can help identify concerns but do not provide a diagnosis; findings should guide further assessment, referral, and appropriate follow-up.

Support emotional well-being through individualized treatment and practical strategies.

- Pharmacologic approaches should be individualized based on symptoms, medical conditions, functional status, medication-related risks, and potential interactions.
- Nonpharmacologic strategies may include cognitive behavioral therapy, movement, relaxation or mindfulness, social connection, meaningful activity, and consistent daily routines.
- Encourage families to focus on five practical areas: Move, Connect, Engage, Sleep, and Support—while seeking professional evaluation when symptoms persist, worsen, or interfere with function.

Turn awareness into action through meaningful, person-centered engagement.

- Help care teams understand each individual's interests, preferences, strengths, routines, and emotional needs and connect meaningful engagement to emotional and cognitive well-being.
- Use real-world scenarios, coaching, role-playing, and ongoing feedback to strengthen observation, communication, and individualized engagement skills.
- Across care transitions, communicate successful approaches, preferences, meaningful changes from baseline, and concerns requiring follow-up to support greater continuity across the care team.

RESOURCES:

[Depression and Older Adults \(National Institute on Aging\)](#)

[Clinical Practice Guidelines for Management of Depression in Elderly \(PMC\)](#)

[Services for Older Adults Living at Home \(National Institute on Aging\)](#)

[Pharmacotherapy of major depressive disorder in older adults: from an evidence-informed stepwise algorithm to precision medicine \(Neuropsychopharmacology\)](#)

[Drug Interactions: What You Should Know \(FDA\)](#)