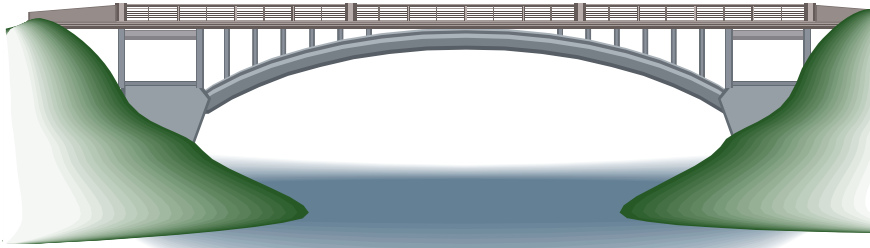


MHASI Matters

Volume 5 Issue 4

Summer 2008



“Building Bridges Between Mental Health and Aging”

Suicide & Older Adults—What We Need to Know

Anyone at any age can be at risk of suicide. However, older Americans are most vulnerable—experiencing the highest suicide rates in the nation.

Research tells us that older adults' suicide attempts are more lethal leaving limited opportunities to save a life once suicidal behavior begins. Ongoing thoughts of depression and hopelessness should not be considered a normal part of aging, but feelings of despair that can be addressed and treated.

- Every day, nearly 15 adults 65 years and older die by suicide in America.
- Older males die from suicide at a rate more than seven times that of older females.
- Among older adults, white individuals are almost three times as likely as non-whites to die from suicide.
- For those 65 and older, there is one suicide for every four attempts compared to one suicide for every 20 attempts for all other age groups.

Risk factors include depression, substance abuse, debilitating physical health problems, social dependency or isolation, family discord, multiple losses, access to firearms.

Protective factors for senior suicide:

- Effective clinical care for mental & physical health & substance abuse.
- Restricted access to highly lethal means of suicide.
- Strong connections to family and community support.
- Skills in problem solving and conflict resolution.

See back cover for contact information if an older person you know may be thinking of suicide.

Sources: OWL *The Voice of Midlife & Older Women*

Senior Suicide: Understanding the Risk, Preventing the Tragedy (SPAN USA)

Did you know?

- **Medicare** requires a patient to pay 50% of the cost for outpatient mental health care, but only 20% for outpatient physical health care.
- The cost of counseling may not be covered by **Medicare** at all.
- **Private insurance** usually has a limit on outpatient mental health care (either cost or # of visits).
- Over 60% of older adults had seen their primary care physician **within one month of their suicide**.
- Older adults **can be helped with the same success** as younger people!

www.psychflix.com

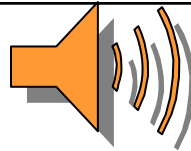
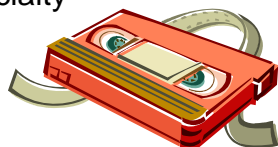
The purpose of this site is to provide **useful listings and reviews of films worldwide that portray psychiatric themes.**

Themes include portrayals of psychiatrists and other mental health professionals at work; people suffering from various mental disorders, alcohol and drug problems; interpersonal conflicts and life crises; treatment of these problems; and contemporary psychological, social, ethical, and moral issues that bear on “mental health” broadly defined.

Listed below are films that depict older adult issues:

- *About Schmidt*—touches on retirement, & complicated bereavement (2002).
- *In a Nutshell: A Portrait of Elizabeth Tashjian*—a documentary with themes of aging, autonomy, “aging in place”, & frontal lobe dysfunction (2005).
- *Iris*—the pathos of final years is poignantly told and the portrayal of Alzheimer’s is clinically authentic (2002).
- *Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont*—the themes here are geriatrics, coping with widowhood and loneliness, and a sitcom on residential living (2005).
- *The Straight Story*—modern odyssey of a man dealing with his own mortality and mistakes and the lasting bonds of family (1999).

Useful websites to access more information and reviews on films are the [Movie Review Query Engine](#) and the [Internet Movie Data Base](#). The Netflix on-line rental service is good for foreign films if you live far from a specialty rental shop.



Upcoming Events

June 19 Understanding Dementia

M.A. Memon, MD, Internist/Geriatrician

June 26 Help! I Feel Overwhelmed!

Milly Kaiser, U of I Extension

Where: Addus Adult Day Services
900 N. Skyline Dr. Suite 300/301
Marion, IL

Time: 3:00—4:30 p.m.

June 26 Caring For Your Parents

WSIU Broadcast of National Show

7:00—9:00 p.m.

June 27 WSIU InFocus Program on Caregiving

9:00—10:00 p.m.

June 29 WSIU InFocus Program on Caregiving (repeats)

12:30—1:30 p.m.

July 17 Caregiver Seminar

Herrin Civic Center

101 S. 16th St.

Herrin, IL

Time: 9:30 a.m.—2:30 p.m.

Pre-Registration is Required by July 10th

Call: 618.993.3304

September 11

6th Annual Spa for the Caregiver’s Spirit

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church

19479 N. IL Hwy 37

Mt. Vernon, IL

Time: 2:30—7:30 p.m.

Pre-Register to 1.888.560.8805 ext 1062

September 19—13th Annual & 3rd Regional Behavioral Health, Aging & Wellness Conference. “Diversity in Aging: Creating a Culture of Care”

Sheraton Four Points

Fairview Heights, IL

Watch mail for conference brochure & registration.

CEU’s available.

Ten Tips for Improving the Mental Health of Older Adults

- **Get plenty of rest.** Devote a full 7-8 hours of sleep each night to sustain a proper balance of physical and mental health.
- **Go for a walk.** Regular exercise at a moderate pace increases blood flow. Invite family or friends to go along and find an indoor venue when weather is bad.
- **Eat something new.** Fix a new recipe or re-invent a traditional one. Invite family and friends to try out these meals. Take turns preparing meals.
- **Exercise the mind.** Engage in challenging jigsaw puzzles, sudokus, riddles, or crossword puzzles. Tutor or read to others at the local school, library, daycare, etc.
- **Spend time with others.** Doing things with others is a great way to raise spirits and engage others in your life.
- **Indulge yourself.** Soothe aches and pains with a long bath or hot shower. Enjoy a healthy dessert, sip a cool drink when it's hot or curl under a warm blanket when it's cold.
- **Stay in.** Don't feel obligated to do everything asked of you. It is ok to say no. To avoid feeling overwhelmed, opt to spend time with yourself once in a while.
- **Make the most of leisure time.** Make plans to visit a place you've always wanted to go. Join a club, start a new hobby, or learn a new skill. Whatever you choose to do, make sure it's something you truly want to do!
- **Get involved.** Volunteering is a great way to give back. Knowing you've helped someone else can help you feel better about yourself. Plus, sharing time with others is a great way to get out and meet new people.
- **Take things one at a time.** Having too much on your plate can be counter-productive. Break large tasks into smaller, more manageable items that can be easily finished. Completing one thing at a time can lead to a greater sense of accomplishment and spur you to do even more!

Source: www.mentalhealthamerica.net

Helpful Resources

Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General. Chapter 5: Older Adults and Mental Health. President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health.

Helpful Websites

American Psychological Association	www.apa.org
Geriatric Mental Health Foundation	www.gmhfonline.org
National Institute of Mental Health	www.nimh.nih.gov
Older Americans' Mental Health Week	www.owl-national.org
Suicide Prevention Action Network USA	www.spanusa.org
U.S. Administration on Aging	www.aoa.gov
Illinois Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan	(see website below)
www.idph.state.il.us/about/chronic/Suicide_Prevention_Plan_Jan-08.pdf	

Questions or Comments?

If you have questions or comments regarding this newsletter or MHASI you may contact the Gero-Psych Specialist in your area.

Franklin-Williamson Human Services, Inc. (Tan)

Contact Person: Lynn Tadda, LCSW
902 West Main St.
West Frankfort, IL 62896
618.937.6483 x7504
Email: lynn.tadda@fwhs.org

Heartland Human Services (Green)

Contact Person: Linda Warner, EdM, QMHP
P.O. Box 1047, 1200 N. Fourth St.
Effingham, IL 62401
217.347.7179 x1046
Email: lwarner@heartlandhs.org

Southeastern Illinois Counseling Centers, Inc. (Blue)

Contact Person: Juanita Suro, MA, LCPC
P.O. Drawer M, 504 Micah Drive
Olney, IL 62450
618.395.4309 x230
Email: jjsuro@msn.com

