

Mental Illness & Aging: Myths vs. Realities

NAMI NJ Annual Conference 2012
"Recovery, Resilience & Wellness Across the Lifespan"

Danielle Micale, MHA, LNHA, CTRS, CDP
UMDNJ-University Behavioral Healthcare
micaledm@umdnj.edu

Profile of Older Americans

- 40.4 million persons 65 and over in 2010
- 13.1% of the U.S. population, over one in every eighty Americans
- The number of older American's increased by 5.4 million or 15.3% since 2000, compared to only an 8.7% increase for the under-65 population

* Administration on Aging 2011 Profile Statistics

Mental Illness & Aging

- Approximately 25% of older adults 65 and over in the U.S. have a diagnosable mental illness
- This number is expected to double over the next three decades
- A very small % of older adults get treatment for mental health services
- Older adults have been historically underserved

What comes to mind?

- When you hear the term “elderly”, “older adult”, “senior citizen”, etc. or when you see a photo like this:



Older Adult Characteristics

- Don't assume that every characteristic applies to every older adult
- Older adults are actually more varied than younger adults

What is “normal” aging?

- Normal aging refers to getting older without any physical or mental pathology/disease. The normal aging process occurs for individuals that are not suffering from an illness.

True or False

- It is normal to be depressed when we reach older adulthood.
- Older adults are at a greater risk of suicide.

True or False

- Losing one's memory and confusion is expected as you age.
- Personality often changes with age.

True or False

- Most older adults live in nursing homes.
- Anxiety is common among older adults.

True or False

- Most older adults with schizophrenia were diagnosed before the age of 45.
- Bipolar disorder is common among older adults.

True or False

- It is easy to tell when an older adult has a substance abuse issue.
- It is too late or pointless to change unhealthy habits later in life.

Questions/Comments

Thank you!
