Aging Well: A New Outlook on Senior Mental Health

In the U.S., nearly 50 million people are 65 or older. Does this describe you? If so, it’s important that you remember to take care of yourself, both physically and mentally. From insightful wisdom to engaging recounts of your experiences, you have a lot to offer!

It’s also important not to give into society’s misconception that as people move past middle age and achieve the status of “senior citizen,” it’s natural — and perhaps even inevitable — to become sad and depressed or easily upset and anxious. As a senior, buying into that myth may leave you resigned to the fact that you will no longer enjoy life as much as you once did.

While it’s true that adults 65 and older may be at risk of developing depression and/or anxiety, it’s not a certainty. There are many effective ways for you to maintain a calm and happy state of mind. Here are some tips...

Stay engaged. Joining a community group, volunteering, attending worship services, or pursuing hobbies with others are excellent ways to stay connected, which is important for maintaining good mental and emotional health.

Learn a new skill. Putting in the time and effort to master a new subject can be very rewarding. Checking the box next to a technology-related challenge can feel especially fulfilling, plus it may help bridge the gap with younger people in your life.

Exercise. After talking with a doctor about what level of exertion is optimal, get moving! Not only is activity good for your physical health, the positive endorphins are excellent for mental and emotional health, as well.

Do something intellectually challenging every day. Reading, completing puzzles, or getting engrossed in an informative TV show keeps minds active, and active minds are less prone to depression and anxiety.

See a doctor regularly. Conversations with a physician about mental health are just as important as conversations about physical health. Doctors can help ensure that you stay physically fit and your emotional health doesn’t get neglected.

Remember, as you age, you don’t have to suffer with depression and anxiety, and there are steps you can take to help keep those conditions at bay. If you’re showing signs of a mental illness, or aren’t feeling quite like yourself, it may be helpful to schedule a doctor’s appointment. Alternatively, you can contact Aurora Mental Health Center for information about mental health services specific to seniors.

Call 303.617.2300 or visit www.aumhc.org to learn more!

The importance of social connectedness on one’s physical, cognitive, and emotional health cannot be underestimated. Multiple studies are indicating that this is a primary factor in healthy aging.

Carol Reszka, LCSW
Program Director, Older Adult and Southeast Adult Outpatient Programs
11th Annual Student Art Contest and Show Draws Attention to Aurora Mental Health Center’s Mission

Aurora Mental Health Center’s annual “Live Life to the Fullest” Art Contest and Show was once again a tremendous way to showcase impressive original art from K-12 students in the local community, while at the same time shining a spotlight on the Center’s important work.

A total of 364 works from 28 different schools were reviewed by judges, with awards given for first and second place in each of four grade categories: K-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12. The theme of the contest was “What Warms Your Heart or Makes You Smile?” Every piece submitted was displayed at the Center’s recent Annual Meeting and Celebration.

“During the past four decades, we have worked hard to become an integral part of the community, and we work vigorously to support individuals and families by promoting hope, healing, and wholeness,” said CEO and Executive Director, Dr. Randy Stith. “Events like the art show allow us to continue our outreach to children and families, celebrating happiness, and creativity.”

COO Kathie Snell went on to say, “It has been wonderful to see such happiness and positive energy reflected in all this beautiful artwork here tonight. When children are thriving, it is such a joy.”

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